Department
for Education

Independent review – antisemitism in schools and colleges in England

October 2026

CP 1691

Government of the United Kingdom
Department for Education

Independent review – antisemitism in schools and colleges in England

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Education
by Command of His Majesty

October 2026

CP 1691

© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at https://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe.

ISBN 978-1-5286-6871-2

E03703747 10/26

Printed on paper containing 40% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by HH Associates Ltd. on behalf of the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office

Contents

Foreword from Sir David Bell KCB DL 5

Executive summary 10

Introduction 21

- Definition 22
- Antisemitism's characteristics 22
- The Jewish community in England 23
- Schools and colleges 24
- Terminology 24

Evidence 26

- Jewish population and education 26
- Views and experiences of children and young people 27
- Views and experiences of teachers 29
- Trends in antisemitism 30

Call for evidence 34

- Methodology 34
- Key conclusions 36

1. Understanding of antisemitism 40

- Antisemitism definition 41
- Training 43

2. Recognising and responding to antisemitism 46

- Antisemitism as a form of harm 46
- Antisemitism as distinct from bullying 48
- Reporting 50
- Recording 52
- Supporting victims 53
- Early intervention for perpetrators 54

3. Prevention 56

- Leadership and school and college culture 56
- Curriculum, tutorial time and pastoral provision 58
  - Holocaust Education 59

Citizenship 61
Media literacy and online safety 62
Tutorial time in colleges 64
Discussing controversial issues 65
Religious education 67
Social cohesion and cultural engagement 69
4. Staff conduct and support 73
Teaching workforce 73
Wider workforce 76
Political impartiality 77
Bullying and harassment of staff 84
5. External Pressures 87
Trade unions 87
External influences on decision making 90
6. Safety and security of Jewish schools 94
Educational visits 95
Travel 96
Workforce pressures 98
7. Accountability 100
Inspectorates 100
Local authorities 102
Academy trusts 103
8. Conclusion 105

Foreword from Sir David Bell KCB DL

Why this review matters

No review of this kind should be necessary. Yet at a time when antisemitism has become increasingly visible in our schools and colleges, communities and public life, it is not only necessary but urgent. My work was commissioned against a backdrop of growing concerns about antisemitism in England and across the UK, not least following several high-profile attacks on our country's Jewish communities.

Antisemitism is, as one contributor to the review put it, "a beast of a being". It adapts, mutates, and manifests in different forms across time and context. It can be overt or subtle, conscious or unconscious, embedded in language, behaviour, or assumptions. It is therefore neither simple to define in practice nor straightforward to confront.

So, at the outset, I want to acknowledge our fellow – Jewish – citizens who have been affected and impacted by antisemitism. Their willingness to come forward and speak candidly, often recounting difficult experiences, has been essential in helping me to build an accurate and honest picture.

Sadly, schools and colleges are not immune from the scourge of antisemitism even though they should be – and, in most cases are – places of safety, curiosity, and mutual respect. They are where young people acquire not only knowledge and skills, but the ability to live well together. Where that does not happen, it is our responsibility to understand why, and to act.

This review has sought to examine how those who lead and work in schools and colleges can respond with clarity, confidence and consistency. While antisemitism directly affects Jewish learners, staff and families, its impact is not confined to those communities alone.

Antisemitism corrodes trust, damages relationships, and undermines the ethos of inclusion that education depends upon. Importantly, the evidence in this report demonstrates that antisemitism arises in settings with few or no Jewish members, often reflecting misconceptions, stereotypes, or harmful narratives that circulate more widely.

Addressing antisemitism is everyone's responsibility including those working in institutions without a visible Jewish community.

The role of education

A single report will not, on its own, 'shift the dial'. I recognise too that antisemitism is a millennia-old evil which, at times, may lie relatively dormant, but never disappears.

Many contributors to the review have rightly highlighted that wider factors are contributing to the rise in antisemitism. These include social media, which can promote antisemitic conspiracy theories and tropes, as well as geopolitical events, particularly the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Yet, in saying that I cannot do everything through this review, does not resign me to believe I am unable to do anything. That would go against everything I have sought to do across my working life as someone who believes in the power of education to change minds, influence attitudes and behaviour, and drive social improvement, even in an increasingly fractured and divided world. This theme also came across strongly in responses to the call for evidence which formed part of the review. I would put it even more starkly, if education isn't our hope for the future, what is?

Equally, it is important that we, as a country, are clear about what we can expect of our schools and colleges when it comes to addressing and tackling antisemitism.

Education settings cannot eliminate all prejudice from society, but they can – and must – take consistent, proportionate and decisive action when antisemitism arises. They can ensure that staff are supported to recognise and respond to it, that clear standards of behaviour are understood and upheld, and that the curriculum and wider institutional culture promote understanding rather than division. Above all, schools and colleges can create environments in which antisemitism is neither normalised nor ignored.

What the review found

The review has engaged widely across the education sector and beyond. I have spoken with teachers, institutional leaders, pupils and students, and with a broad range of organisations and stakeholders. I arranged for a survey of UCAS applicants on antisemitism, receiving over 5,000 responses, and issued a national call for evidence, which generated 587 responses and 84 submissions via the review's email inbox. These provide valuable insights into both students' and teachers' lives as well as institutional practice.

Evidence from those working within the education system is presented throughout this review and underpins our recommendations on how to tackle antisemitism. However, there is limited research evaluating which actions or areas of intervention are the most effective at reducing antisemitism in practice. Therefore, more work is needed to establish which interventions have a measurable effect and should be given priority.

I am deeply grateful to all those who have contributed their time, expertise and perspectives. This includes educators who are striving to address complex issues; organisations that support schools and colleges in promoting inclusion and tackling

prejudice; and those who shared personal accounts in the hope of driving change. Their collective input has been indispensable to this work.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has worked on this review. In particular, I am grateful to my secretariat for their hard work and commitment in supporting its delivery, and to the members of the review's reference group, overseen by Dame Tamara Finkelstein, for their invaluable input, expertise and guidance.

The review has identified that antisemitism in education is a growing issue requiring better training, clearer guidance, stronger accountability, and a system-wide, coherent approach across all schools and colleges, not only those with Jewish learners.

These conclusions point to strengths to build upon and areas where action is urgently required. They reveal a system in which commitment can be strong, but where understanding, confidence and consistency can vary.

The recommendations amount to the most comprehensive examination of how the education system prevents and responds to antisemitism in recent years, requiring change at both institutional and system level. They aim to ensure that all schools and colleges are equipped to recognise antisemitism, respond effectively when it occurs, and foster environments in which respect and understanding are actively promoted.

I sought to craft them with an eye to the practicalities of being an educational leader, as I myself am – albeit not in a school or college – with many demands and expectations on me and the institution I lead. However, I also understand that action is needed now in tackling antisemitism as delay risks allowing harmful behaviours and attitudes to become further embedded.

Delivering lasting change

I have reflected carefully on whether the recommendations in this report should focus solely on antisemitism or take a broader approach encompassing all racism and prejudice. In some areas, a wider framing is appropriate, recognising the common themes and systemic issues that can affect different groups. However, in others – particularly those relating to training, reporting, and recording – a specific focus on antisemitism is essential.

Too often, antisemitism has been considered only through a broader lens of discrimination and prejudice. Experience has shown that this approach has not delivered the understanding, visibility, or progress required. If meaningful change is to be achieved, antisemitism must be recognised and addressed in its own right, while remaining connected to the wider work of tackling all forms of racism and prejudice.

Whilst it is not a review of legislation, the recommendations have been developed through careful consideration of the relevant legal framework, rights and duties.[1] [2] They are intended to support schools and colleges to identify, prevent and respond effectively to antisemitism as part of their wider responsibilities, while balancing their legal duties relating to preventing harassment, discrimination or victimisation, safeguarding learner welfare, and protecting lawful freedom of expression.

For some, I may not have gone as far as they wanted in, for example, calling for an absolute ban, in all circumstances, of 'political' symbols in schools and colleges. However, I saw little point in making recommendations that were legally untested or impossible to implement, or both. Again, speaking as an institutional leader, there is nothing more unhelpful than being asked to implement actions that you know are unworkable or for which there is a dubious legal basis.

We should continue to uphold freedom of speech within the law while fostering tolerance and mutual respect. In the past, there was, perhaps, a stronger expectation that people would exercise their freedoms in ways that avoided causing unnecessary offence to others. Today, that expectation can sometimes feel weaker, with some appearing less concerned about the impact their words or actions may have on those around them.

I do not believe that encouraging empathy or asking people to consider how others might feel amounts to a restriction on free speech; rather, it is an important part of living and learning together in a diverse society.

This report is not an end point. It is the foundation for a significant programme of change requiring sustained and collective effort. The responsibility for addressing antisemitism in schools and colleges must be shared by government, institutions, leaders, staff, and communities. Progress will depend on the implementation of recommendations, as well as a continued commitment to listen, learn and adapt.

Finally, while my work has inevitably focused on potential changes to policy, practice and procedures, I have been clear with everyone I met that I wanted to hear and reflect the voices of those most directly affected by antisemitism. Their testimony has

---

[1] That includes those contained in the Equality Act 2010, duties to safeguard and promote pupils' welfare under the Education Act 2002, inspection arrangements through Ofsted and the Independent School Inspectorate, the Human Rights Act 1998, schools' political impartiality duties under the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Independent School Standards). For colleges, section 43 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986 and, where applicable, the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023.

[2] At the time of writing, Lord Macdonald of River Glaven KC has been appointed to lead an independent review of laws on public order and hate crime, which will examine whether existing legislation is effective and proportionate, and whether it protects communities from hate and intimidation.

shaped my understanding of both the scale of the challenge and the urgency of the response required.

I hope that my review and its recommendation will have a positive impact by reducing antisemitic incidents in schools and colleges. At the same time, and throughout, I have been seized of the importance of fostering greater confidence, stronger leadership, improved understanding, and a culture in which antisemitism is challenged consistently, and inclusion is experienced by all.

It is therefore appropriate that I conclude with the words of the Jewish Leadership Council's submission to the review:

> *"Addressing antisemitism in schools [and colleges] is one of the most meaningful starting points for addressing the root causes of antisemitism in this country."*

Sir David Bell KCB DL

Independent Reviewer

Executive summary

Antisemitism is an increasingly significant issue for schools and colleges, mirroring wider trends across society. The evidence gathered by this review points to high levels of antisemitic incidents occurring in classrooms, online and beyond. Key barriers to effective prevention and response include uncertainty about what constitutes antisemitism, lack of confidence in reporting systems, inconsistent recording practices, and limited staff training. While schools and colleges are committed to creating inclusive environments, the review finds that stronger and more consistent support is needed across the system.

Meaningful progress in tackling antisemitism in schools and colleges requires a coordinated whole-system response, and this is underpinned in the review by 27 recommendations.

Central is the call for:

- **wider adoption** by schools and colleges of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working **definition of antisemitism** as a starting point for understanding and discussions;
- strengthening *Keeping children safe in education* by making clear that **antisemitism may constitute harm and raise safeguarding concerns**;
- a coherent, sequenced **whole-school or college approach** that embeds prevention of antisemitism through curriculum, learner experience, and leadership;
- **amending the Teachers' Standards** to explicitly reference antisemitism, ensuring all teaching professionals understand their responsibilities to confront and act on this kind of hatred and prejudice.
- **practical support** to help leaders navigate increasingly **complex and sensitive issues**, including establishing a dedicated support service for schools, colleges and local authorities dealing with incidents relating to antisemitism, as well as providing continued **support for the unique security challenges** faced by Jewish schools.

Together, the review's recommendations are intended to create a more confident, consistent and effective system, ensuring that Jewish pupils, students and staff can participate fully in education and feel safe, respected and able to thrive.

Evidence

Survey evidence shows that antisemitism is experienced and witnessed by both students and teachers across education settings. One in five young people reported witnessing or experiencing antisemitism, rising to almost three in five among Jewish respondents. Incidents most commonly involve stereotypes, jokes and derogatory

comments, occurring in social spaces, classrooms and online. Reporting rates are low, often because learners do not believe incidents will be taken seriously or addressed effectively. Teachers also report high levels of workplace antisemitism and concerns about inadequate organisational responses.

The wider evidence points to a long-term increase in antisemitism. Reported antisemitic incidents have risen substantially over the last decade and remain at historically high levels following the events of 7 October 2023. Online abuse accounts for a large proportion of incidents, and children are disproportionately represented among victims. Surveys of Jewish people show growing concern about antisemitism, with more than four in five now viewing it as a problem in the UK. At the same time, evidence suggests increasing prevalence of anti-Israel attitudes and confusion around the boundary between legitimate political expression and antisemitism, creating challenges for schools and colleges when managing sensitive discussions.

The review's call for evidence reinforced these findings. Responses highlighted that antisemitism is encountered relatively frequently in education settings, with pupils and students identified as the most common perpetrators.

1. Understanding of antisemitism

While many professionals said they were confident in responding to antisemitism, evidence from the review suggests that understanding can be limited, particularly when contemporary antisemitism is more subtle. This can lead to inconsistent and sometimes ineffective responses.

The review found no consistent system-wide reference point for identifying and responding to antisemitism. Although awareness of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism is high, relatively few schools and colleges use it in practice.

Wider adoption of the IHRA definition, supported by training and effective implementation, would improve understanding and confidence. The definition can act as a helpful starting point for further training and necessary conversation. A stronger focus on antisemitism training for leaders, staff and new teachers will help improve professional understanding of antisemitism.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

1. The Secretary of State for Education should encourage all schools and colleges to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

2. The Department for Education should ensure that school and college leaders, staff and trainee teachers receive training in understanding antisemitism. To enable this:
    a. The Department for Education should commission the preparation of a dedicated training package on antisemitism for school and college leaders and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs).
    b. The Department for Education should encourage school and college leaders to integrate understanding of antisemitism within safeguarding, equalities, and anti-racism training. This should encompass all staff and others working in schools and colleges, including support staff, governors, academy members and trustees.
    c. The Department for Education should ensure teachers have a good understanding of antisemitism delivered through initial teacher training and the early career framework for schools and initial teacher training for further education teachers.

2. Recognising and responding to antisemitism

Antisemitism is not always recognised as a form of harm that may raise safeguarding concerns, with incidents often addressed solely through behaviour or disciplinary processes.

Existing statutory and non-statutory guidance does not consistently support schools and colleges to identify antisemitism as a distinct form of prejudice, resulting in variability in how incidents are recognised, recorded and addressed. The evidence suggests that clearer guidance, stronger recognition of antisemitism within *Keeping children safe in education*, and improved staff confidence (including understanding of online risks) would support more consistent practice across schools and colleges.

The review also found underreporting and inconsistent recording of antisemitic incidents, particularly those perceived as isolated or ‘low-level’, despite their cumulative impact on learners' wellbeing. Victims do not always receive appropriate support, while responses can focus on sanctions rather than education and prevention.

Effective practice requires accessible reporting mechanisms, robust recording processes, appropriate support for victims, and early intervention for perpetrators of antisemitic abuse, recognising that antisemitic behaviour may sometimes indicate wider safeguarding concerns or vulnerability to harmful influences.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

3. The Department for Education should strengthen *Keeping children safe in education* to make clear that racism and prejudice, including antisemitism, may constitute harm. The guidance should make clear that early identification, challenge and intervention are important safeguarding responses, where appropriate.
4. Schools' and colleges' online safety policies, safeguarding policies, and associated staff training should ensure that staff are appropriately informed about the nature and risks of harmful antisemitic content that children and young people may encounter online.
5. The Department for Education should update the behaviour and preventing bullying guidance for schools to include advice on identifying, preventing and responding to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice, including setting out expected standards of support and good practice for victims of abuse.
6. College leaders should consider if their behaviour policy and student code of conduct includes steps to identify, prevent and respond to antisemitic and other forms of abuse, harassment and intimidation.
7. Schools and colleges should establish clear and accessible systems for reporting, recording and monitoring antisemitic incidents. To enable this:
    a. Schools and colleges should support peer reporting and anonymous disclosures, and signpost learners to information about available support services (such as Community Security Trust).
    b. Schools and colleges recording systems should include a specific category for antisemitic incidents, including the nature and type of incident, involving identifiable victims as well as wider manifestations of antisemitism.
8. The Home Office should work with the Department for Education to expand Prevent advice for schools and colleges, to provide clarity and support decision making on when antisemitism, and other themes relevant to extremist narratives, may be indicators of radicalisation risk.

3. Prevention

Strong leadership and an inclusive institutional culture are fundamental to effective prevention. Leaders play a critical role in setting expectations, fostering respect, and ensuring antisemitism is recognised and challenged consistently. Evidence suggests that some settings may underestimate the relevance of antisemitism, resulting in a more reactive approach and missed opportunities to build understanding of Jewish life and identity.

Curriculum and educational provision have an important preventative role, but practice is inconsistent. While Holocaust education remains a vital component of pupils' historical understanding, it should not be relied upon as the sole means of learning about Jewish people or antisemitism.

The review highlights the importance of broader and more coherent coverage of Jewish identity, culture and contemporary experiences across subjects such as religious education, citizenship and media literacy, alongside greater support for teachers to discuss sensitive and controversial issues with confidence.

The review found that meaningful interaction, enrichment activities and social cohesion initiatives are powerful tools for reducing prejudice and building understanding. Opportunities for learners to engage directly with Jewish communities, cultures and lived experiences can challenge stereotypes and strengthen inclusion.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

9. The Office for Equality and Opportunity should launch a cross-sector awareness campaign to reinforce Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities with respect to Jewish identity, as both a race and religion, so that it is fully recognised within school and college policies and processes to meet equality and safeguarding duties.
10. The Department for Education should produce, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, good practice guidance to support school and college leaders in developing a coherent and sequenced approach to tackling antisemitism. This should include curriculum content and wider educational opportunities that support understanding of historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, alongside the policies, processes and support needed to ensure a whole-institution response.
11. The Department for Education should strengthen the national approach to Holocaust education, underpinned by evidence and clear expectations, to ensure all pupils develop a secure understanding of the Holocaust, including the role of antisemitism within it. To enable this:
    a. The Department for Education should commission an evidence-informed review of the effectiveness of Holocaust education to understand better how pupils encounter and make sense of the Holocaust, identify effective practice and areas for improvement, and inform future guidance and support for schools.
    b. The Department for Education should ensure that the purpose of, and expectations for, Holocaust education are clearly articulated and consistently supported through non-statutory guidance, including understanding antisemitism as a central explanatory factor in explaining the Holocaust.

    c. All schools and colleges should mark Holocaust Memorial Day, supported by secure historical understanding and linked to wider educational provision.

12. The Department for Education, schools and colleges should address antisemitism through appropriate places in the curriculum, tutorial time and pastoral provision. To enable this:
    a. The Department for Education should ensure that citizenship education has sufficient opportunity to address contemporary antisemitism, alongside other forms of hatred and prejudice, within a coherent programme of learning.
    b. The Department for Education should ensure schools and colleges embed high-quality teaching on media literacy and online safety, helping learners to recognise and confront harmful online content, including antisemitism and conspiracy theories.
    c. Schools and colleges should make effective use of tutorial time, pastoral provision and wider learning opportunities to address contemporary antisemitism alongside other forms of hatred and prejudice.
    d. The Department for Education should develop, quality assure and publish practical resources and tools to support schools, colleges, academy trusts, college groups, and/or local authorities in addressing antisemitism and wider hatred and social cohesion issues. These resources should include guidance and materials to help all staff discuss controversial issues and respond to significant global events, particularly those relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict and contemporary antisemitism.
13. The Department for Education should ensure that Judaism is represented with appropriate depth and coherence within the proposed curriculum framework for religious education. The aims for the subject should reflect Judaism as a diverse and contemporary tradition, so that where antisemitism is addressed, it is grounded in a secure knowledge of Jewish life, belief, culture and community.
14. The Department for Education, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should promote and enable opportunities for schools and colleges to engage with Jewish communities and contemporary Jewish life through social mixing, enrichment and cultural engagement.

4. Staff conduct and support

Existing professional standards and misconduct processes provide a framework for addressing antisemitic behaviour by staff, but greater clarity is needed.

Evidence suggests that antisemitism is not always explicitly recognised within professional standards or disciplinary decision-making, leading to inconsistency in how incidents are identified, acted on, and escalated.

The review highlights the importance of strengthening professional standards by explicitly mentioning antisemitism in the Teachers' Standards, improving regulatory understanding of antisemitism, and ensuring all staff, including support staff, understand their responsibility to challenge prejudice and maintain inclusive learning environments.

The review found significant uncertainty among education professionals about how to navigate political expression, political impartiality and discussions relating to the State of Israel, Palestine and antisemitism. Professionals reported a lack of confidence in addressing controversial issues sometimes leading to avoidance of important conversations.

Clearer guidance and steers from the Department for Education and institutions themselves are needed to help staff distinguish between legitimate political discussion and unacceptable discriminatory conduct.

The review found that antisemitism directed at Jewish staff is having a substantial impact on wellbeing, confidence and retention. Many Jewish professionals reported experiencing hostility, stereotyping, exclusion or abuse, while some lacked confidence that reporting mechanisms would lead to meaningful action.

The evidence emphasises the need for schools and colleges to strengthen prevention, reporting and response arrangements, ensuring all staff can work in an environment that is safe, respectful and free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

15. The Department for Education should ensure that professionals working in schools or colleges are clear that antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred are forms of discrimination that are incompatible with professional conduct. To support this:
    a. The Department for Education should amend Part One of the Teachers' Standards to enhance expectations on teachers to manage pupil behaviour includes a requirement to challenge prejudice and hate-based behaviour, including antisemitism.
    b. The Department for Education should amend Part Two of the Teachers' Standards to ensure antisemitic, racist and other discriminatory behaviour is incompatible with professional conduct, within and outside the school, including online.
    c. Schools and colleges should ensure their staff code of conduct specifies that antisemitic, and other forms of religious and racial

harassment, abuse and discrimination, are incompatible with professional conduct.

16. School and college leaders should consider the appropriateness of political expression and identifiers in their respective settings, considering the time place and manner alongside their respective legal duties. To enable this:
    a. School leaders should carefully consider the time, place, and manner of political expression (including in relation to staff dress codes and pupil uniform policies), ensuring that the wearing or displaying of political symbols, flags, or slogans, and the expression of political views, are compliant with their legal duties in relation to political impartiality, whist being mindful of promoting respectful dialogue, inclusion and engagement.
    b. College leaders should consider setting out how they will approach the wearing or displaying of political identifiers by staff, balancing their duties relating to safeguarding, equality and freedom of speech, with the need to ensure that all students can engage effectively in their education and that the welfare of students under 18 is protected.
17. The Department for Education should strengthen guidance for schools on political impartiality to provide clear examples that illustrate how it should be applied in practice, particularly in relation to contemporary and sensitive geopolitical topics.
18. School and college employers should have a robust reporting, escalation and response to antisemitic abuse, bullying, harassment or similar incidents against staff and, where relevant, governors and trustees. All incidents against staff, including those involving pupils, students, parents, colleagues or third parties, should be identified, recorded, investigated and addressed promptly and appropriately.

5. External pressures

Some Jewish staff feel excluded or insufficiently supported by education unions, particularly due to union activity and messaging relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

While the review does not conclude that education unions are inherently antisemitic and recognises their commitment to tackling racism and prejudice, it found that some actions by unions, local branches or individual members have contributed to perceptions among Jewish professionals that their concerns are not taken seriously. The review concludes that unions should reflect on this and strengthen efforts to address antisemitism alongside other forms of prejudice and hatred.

More broadly, external pressure from parents, campaign groups and the wider community can attempt to influence decision-making, often on issues connected to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The evidence suggests this can create a ‘chilling effect’, leading some schools and teachers to avoid legitimate discussion of controversial issues through fear of complaints or public backlash. The review therefore identifies a need for stronger, dedicated support service to help provide guidance for school and college leaders so that decisions can be made confidently, lawfully and in the best interests of learners.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

19. Education unions should have robust policies and processes to tackle antisemitism and ensure members are sufficiently trained in understanding, recognising and responding to antisemitism. Any incidents of alleged antisemitism by trade union officials, representatives or members must be consistently addressed in line with union policies to tackle racism or prejudice.
20. The Department for Education should establish a dedicated support service to help schools, colleges and local authorities manage complex incidents related to antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred. To enable this**:**
    a. The Department for Education should establish a well-defined and well publicised ‘front door’ for support.
    b. The Department for Education should establish a network of peer-to-peer advisers (at local authority or at school/college leader level, as appropriate) to provide rapid, expert support.

6. Safety and security of Jewish schools

Jewish schools operate within a distinct security environment, reflecting the persistent threat of antisemitism. Jewish schools are required to implement extensive security measures, including guards, controlled access systems and protective infrastructure, supported in part, by government-funded security grants. Despite this support, Jewish schools face additional costs and responsibilities that are not experienced elsewhere in the education sector.

The review found that security concerns affect many aspects of school life, including educational visits, travel to and from school, and staff recruitment and retention. Pupils often experience or fear antisemitic abuse while travelling, leading some to conceal visible signs of their Jewish identity.

School leaders in Jewish schools also carry significant additional safeguarding and security responsibilities, creating substantial workload, wellbeing and workforce pressures. The evidence highlights the need for continued security support, stronger

measures to improve safety beyond school premises, and greater practical and pastoral support for school leaders.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

21. The Home Office should utilise some of the £250 million recently announced by the Home Secretary for additional security support for Jewish communities to help ensure that Jewish schools and colleges can undertake educational visits safely, alongside meeting wider security needs.
22. The Department for Transport should deliver a joint communications campaign with relevant stakeholders to deter antisemitic behaviour, with campaign activity strategically placed at transport hubs near Jewish schools and colleges and accompanied by an evaluation to assess impact and inform future activity.
23. The Department for Education should work in partnership with relevant organisations and community stakeholders to ensure that Jewish school and college leaders have access to comprehensive support, specialist advice on security and safeguarding risks, opportunities to participate in professional networks for sharing good practice, and leadership support and mentoring.

7. Accountability

Accountability for antisemitism is dispersed across multiple frameworks and organisations. Inspection arrangements provide routes for scrutiny and intervention, where actions to tackle antisemitism are considered indirectly through broader inspection areas such as leadership and safeguarding.

The review concludes that existing accountability arrangements can be strengthened through clearer expectations within inspection frameworks, improved use of data and intelligence at local level, and stronger academy trust-level oversight.

Local authorities can play an important role in identifying patterns of prejudice-related harm through effective partnership working and information sharing, while academy trusts are well placed to monitor trends, ensure consistency across schools and colleges, and provide challenge and support where concerns arise. The review highlights the importance of making accountability for tackling antisemitism more visible, coherent and effective within existing systems.

The recommendations in this chapter are:

24. Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate should each build on existing training and professional development to support inspectors' confidence in evaluating and reporting on how effectively leaders identify,

manage and prevent incidents of antisemitism and other forms of racial and religious prejudice.

25. The Department for Education should commission Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate, separately and within their respective remits, to undertake thematic work on how schools and colleges identify, prevent and respond to antisemitism and other forms of racism and religious prejudice, helping to build a stronger national picture and improve understanding of effective practice.
26. Local authorities should, through existing responsibilities, partnerships and local intelligence arrangements, work with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies to help inform local visibility of patterns of antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice affecting children and young people, and to support schools and colleges in responding effectively where concerns arise.
27. Ofsted should consider, as it develops its academy trust inspection framework, how trust-level oversight of responses to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice can be reflected proportionately, particularly where concerns are serious, repeated, or evident across more than one school.

8. Conclusion

Tackling antisemitism in schools and colleges requires a coordinated, whole-system approach. The recommendations in the review are intended to operate as a mutually reinforcing package to deliver lasting change. Successful implementation will depend on sustained national leadership, clear responsibilities, effective collaboration, and robust monitoring and evaluation to ensure progress is maintained. Through gaining knowledge and understanding of Jewish people, all pupils and students should leave the school and college system as tolerant members of society, able to combat antisemitic attitudes they may come across.

Introduction

In March 2026, the then Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, commissioned Sir David Bell KCB DL to lead an independent review in response to persistently high levels of antisemitism across society, including within schools and colleges.

The review aims to strengthen schools' and colleges' ability to prevent, identify and respond effectively to antisemitism, as part of their wider responsibility to tackle hatred and prejudice in all its forms.

Tackling antisemitism and reflecting the experiences of Jewish people has been the focus of the review. Therefore, many of the recommendations focus specifically on identifying and tackling antisemitism, but several emphasise the broader imperative to confront and address all forms of racism and prejudice, at every level and in all its manifestations.

The review examines how antisemitism is currently addressed, including:

- how effectively schools and colleges use their policies to inform decisions and manage incidents;
- the support available to schools and colleges, including relevant government guidance;
- the mechanisms for accountability where incidents are not handled appropriately;
- the actions taken to prevent antisemitism; and
- the role and influence of campaigning organisations, and how these shape decision-making within schools and colleges.

The overarching aim of the review is to make practical recommendations to government and the schools and colleges sector to ensure that instances of antisemitism are addressed as effectively as possible. It is also intended to help to build strong foundations in children and young people that address the root causes of antisemitism.

The focus of the review is set out in the terms of reference.

While the review focuses on schools and colleges in England, its recommendations may also be relevant to policymakers and education providers in the devolved administrations of the United Kingdom.

Definition

Since 2016, the UK Government has adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism:

> "*Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."*

The definition is accompanied by illustrative examples. In relation to Israel, these include "the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived of as a Jewish collectivity", while also making clear that "criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."

This working definition has been adopted by many other countries from across the world, and international organisations including the United Nations and European Union. For the purposes of this review, references to "antisemitism" should be understood as referring to the IHRA working definition and its accompanying examples.

Antisemitism's characteristics

Antisemitism is a longstanding, distinct form of hatred. This does not mean it should be treated as more important than other forms of prejudice – all are abhorrent and must be tackled – but it does have several characteristics that make it uniquely complex:

- *Intertwined racial and religious dimensions:* Antisemitism is a longstanding form of racism and religious prejudice, as Jewish identity can encompass both an ethnicity and religion. For instance, it is possible to be an atheist and Jewish. This means hostility toward Jewish people may target them as a racialised group, a faith community, or both simultaneously.
- *Conflicting beliefs:* Those expressing antisemitic views may describe Jewish people as having excessive power, while also portraying them as outsiders or lesser than others. Although contradictory, both stereotypes are used to fuel hostility towards Jewish people.
- *Conspiracy thinking:* Antisemitism frequently centres on claims that Jews secretly organise or influence global events, making it unusually tied to wide-ranging conspiracy theories.
- *Shape-shifting nature:* Antisemitism has adapted across time – appearing in religious, racial, and political forms – while reusing similar underlying tropes.
- *Scapegoating in times of crisis:* Jewish communities have repeatedly been blamed for broader social or economic problems.

- *'Othering' and dual loyalty accusations:* Jews are often cast as not fully belonging to the societies they live in, with suspicions about their loyalty.
- *The State of Israel:* In contemporary contexts, antisemitism can manifest through attitudes towards Israel. Depending on the circumstances, examples could include when criticism of actions by the Israeli state crosses into applying double standards, denying Jewish people's right to self-determination altogether, or holding all Jews collectively responsible for Israel's actions. This reflects older patterns of collective blame and 'othering'.

Together, these themes show how antisemitism is both persistent and adaptable, often operating through seemingly contradictory ideas that reinforce one another.

Antisemitism in schools and colleges must be understood within the context of a sustained increase in antisemitism across the country, both in terms of recorded incidents and also general attitudes.

Although antisemitism is a persistent and longstanding form of hate, antisemitic incidents have increased significantly in recent years (see 'Evidence' chapter). The catalyst for this major increase was the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent conflict in the Middle East. Antisemitic incidents have reached historically high levels, with this increase also reflected in schools and colleges.

The Jewish community in England

The Jewish community in England is diverse and multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of identities, beliefs and experiences. Some Jewish people are highly religiously observant, some are liberal in their approach to the religion, while others are secular or identify culturally or ethnically rather than through religious practice. It is possible to express Jewish identity through traditions, language, family history or shared experience rather than faith alone.

There is no single, uniform 'Jewish perspective' and throughout the review we have sought to recognise this through a range of engagements with different stakeholders.

The Jewish population represents a broad spectrum of views on social, political and religious issues, including differing perspectives on matters such as Israel, integration, education and public life. Recognising this diversity is important in avoiding generalisation and ensuring that this review does not treat Jewish people as a homogenous group.

At the same time, many Jewish individuals and communities share common experiences, including a strong sense of identity and continuity, as well as a historical awareness shaped by centuries of discrimination and persecution, including antisemitism.

Schools and colleges

The schools and colleges which are in scope of the review include:

- All schools in England (other than nursery schools), including maintained schools, academy schools, special schools, independent schools, Pupil Referral Units and alternative provision academies
- Sixth form provision in these schools
- Institutions within the further education (FE) sector (general further education colleges, designated institutions and sixth form colleges)
- 16-19 academies.

FE colleges typically cater to learners aged 16 and over, including young people studying academic and technical qualifications, as well as adult learners who return to education for training and upskilling. The goal of FE is to prepare learners for further study or work through technical or career-orientated skills. FE colleges typically offer a wide range of qualifications from basic skills (level 2) to advanced qualifications including A levels, T levels, BTECs and apprenticeships.

While some of the statutory duties on schools and colleges are the same, for example, safeguarding and the Prevent duty, there are also some differences. FE colleges have a statutory duty to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for students, employees and visiting speakers (section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986).

Any FE college that is registered as a higher education provider with the Office for Students will also be subject to relevant duties under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (as amended by the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023) and staff, visiting speakers and non-student members will have had access to the Office for Students free speech complaint scheme from 1 September 2026.

Local authorities, governing bodies, head teachers and proprietors of independent schools (including academies) have a legal duty to prohibit the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school and to ensure a balanced presentation of opposing political views where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils (Education Act 1996 and Independent School Standards). While these statutory duties do not apply in the same way to FE colleges, those that educate 14–16-year-olds are required to comply with the provisions in the Education Act as a condition of funding arrangements.

Terminology

This review considers experiences across schools and colleges. The term *learner* is used throughout to refer collectively to pupils and students in educational settings.

Where discussion relates specifically to schools, the term *pupil* is used; where it relates specifically to further education providers, the term *student* is used.

Evidence

This section brings together a range of evidence related to the Jewish population in England and experiences of antisemitism.

The evidence suggests that antisemitism is increasingly prevalent and is a particular issue among children and young people. Antisemitic incidents have risen over the past two decades and remain high, with increasing numbers of Jewish people identifying antisemitism as a major threat.

Jewish population and education

The Jewish population of England and the home nations is comparatively small. The 2021 ONS census in England and Wales reported c.287,000 people who identified as Jewish – 0.5% of the population, of which c.54,000 were aged 5 to 19. The Jewish population is regionally concentrated in London, Manchester and Leeds.

Despite not having precise figures, we know a significant proportion of Jewish children are educated in Jewish schools. Some studies estimate c.36,000 students attended one of the 136 Jewish state and independent schools in the academic year 2023/24, with roughly two thirds in primary schools (c.22,000).

In the 1970s an estimated 20% of all school-aged Jewish children attended Jewish schools and this has risen to nearly 70%.[3] [4] We do not currently have estimates for the number of Jewish students in colleges.

Pupils in Jewish schools are disproportionately likely to be Charedi (Strictly Orthodox), as almost all Charedi children attend Jewish schools compared with 43% of other Jewish children.[5] Younger parents are also more likely to use Jewish schools.[6]

In addition, the proportion of pupils attending Strictly Orthodox Jewish schools, has increased from 40% in 1995/96 to 60% in 2023/24.[7] Strictly Orthodox schools have more of a focus on religious observance and studies compared to other Jewish schools.

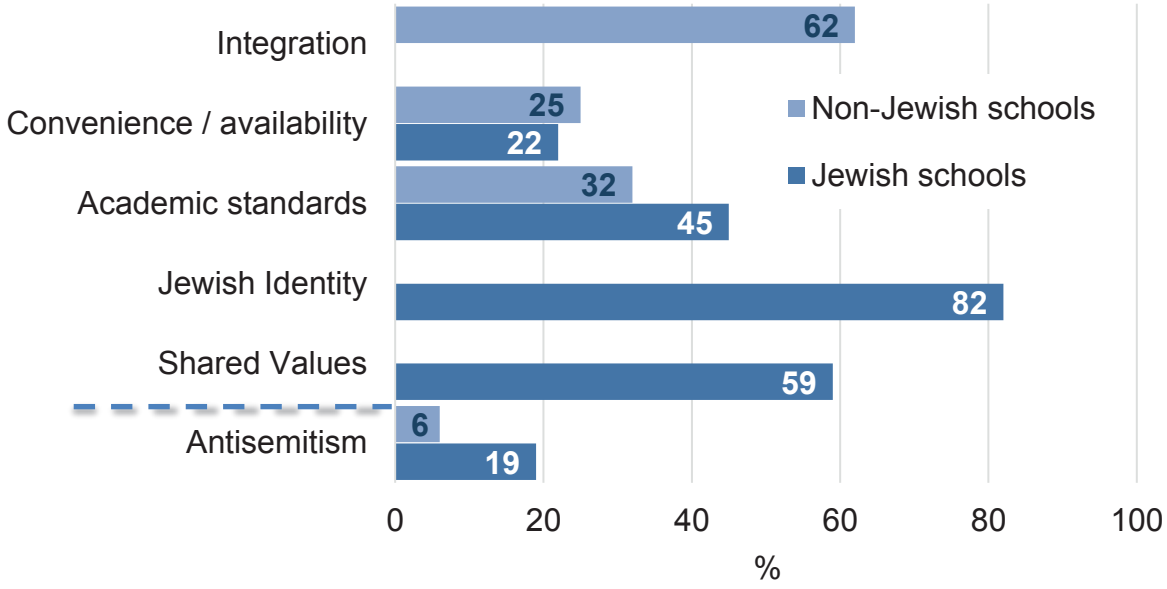
When deciding whether to attend a Jewish school, evidence suggests parental decision making is largely driven by having a shared Jewish identity, to be in settings

[3] JPR (2016) The rise and rise of Jewish schools in the United Kingdom
[4] JPR (2025) Five interesting facts about Jewish schools in the UK
[5] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools
[6] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools
[7] JPR (2025) Numbers of Jewish children in Jewish schools

with children who hold the same values and academic standards, rather than primarily a fear of antisemitism in non-Jewish schools.[8]

However, recent surveys have found one-fifth of parents whose children attended a mainstream school said that increases in antisemitism might make them more likely to choose a Jewish school if they were deciding now, and this rises to two-fifths for those who reported their children had experienced antisemitism.[9]

Figure 1: Parental motivation for sending children to Jewish schools, % expressed by parents



Source: JPR (2025) Five interesting facts about Jewish schools in the UK

Views and experiences of children and young people

Through UCAS – the Universities and Colleges Admission Service – and as part of this independent review, a survey was conducted of England domiciled applicants, aged 16-19 and received over 5,000 responses. The full data tables can be found in the accompanying evidence annex[10].

Respondents were 16–18-year-olds in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and FE colleges. It is important to note the data collected is not representative of all school and college students and a low sample size of 92 students who identify as Jewish

[8] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools

[9] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools

[10] Some of the percentage figures in this section are adjusted to account for respondents who selected more than one option and may differ from summing individual percentages in the data tables.

should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the conclusions still provide a valuable insight into students' experience of antisemitism.

One in five of all respondents (20%) said they have experienced or witnessed antisemitism – 2% experiencing it directly and 18% witnessing it happen more generally. A slightly lower proportion of students FE colleges reported this (15%). This compares with almost three in five (59%) who identify as Jewish who reported having experienced antisemitism.

Of all respondents who experienced or witnessed antisemitism, they said it was most likely to occur in social areas (68%), online or on social media (44%) and in lessons or classrooms (38%). Jokes, stereotypes and comments about Jewish people were the main forms of antisemitism, identified by 85% of those that experienced or witnessed it.

Roughly half of respondents who witnessed or experienced antisemitism said that incidents were not reported, with the key reasons for not reporting being that they did not think it was serious enough or it would be taken seriously. Of the 19% of respondents who said it was reported by themselves or someone else, one in four (27%) believed the school or college's response was ineffective.

Overall, 12% of respondents believe antisemitism was an issue in their school or college, and this rises to almost half of students who identify as Jewish (46%). Antisemitism appears to be part of a broader issue, with 59% of all respondents having either personally experienced discrimination, bullying and harassment or witnessing it happen to others – with 46% of these individuals saying it was related to race or ethnicity.

The main ways respondents believed discrimination and prejudice could be prevented were:

- taking reports seriously and responding quickly (53%);
- having consistent consequences when someone has engaged in discriminatory behaviour (48%); and
- training staff to recognise and challenge discriminatory behaviour (35%).

When given the ability through a free text question to express how antisemitism could be prevented, two additional themes were commonly expressed:

- the need for education about Judaism, antisemitism, and history; and
- tackling social media, jokes, memes, and misinformation.

A separate survey targeted at Jewish individuals, shows young people in this group are more likely to experience antisemitism, with an estimated 46% of 16 to 29-year-olds reporting that they have personally experienced at least one incident of antisemitism – the most common forms being verbal and online harassment. Those

from an Orthodox background and at school, college or university were more likely to have experienced verbal antisemitic attacks.[11]

Views and experiences of teachers

A survey of approximately 10,000 teachers by Teacher Tapp found that 26% have dealt with an antisemitic incident before – 1% regularly, 6% sometime and 19% rarely.[12]

In a survey run by the National Education Union (NEU) with their members, 9% said they had witnessed antisemitism, and a further 2% reported having both witnessed and personally experienced it. Incidents were more common in secondary schools, where 21% report witnessing or experiencing antisemitism, compared with just 4% in primary and nursery schools.[13]

In a survey of secondary school teachers who teach about the Holocaust, 40% reported encountering antisemitism among their students – 37% saying they encountered it 'occasionally' and the remainder 3% always or often.[14] Teachers reported "it was often antisemitic tropes that were repeated by students, related to erroneous myths about physical appearance or references to money."

In a UK survey of Jewish teachers, 51% of Jewish teachers also report having experienced antisemitism in the workplace in the past year and 37% having witnessed it more broadly. 90% said their employers need more training on recognising and challenging antisemitism and 52% felt that when they reported issues, appropriate action was not taken to deal with the problem.[15]

These figures suggest that students and teachers are likely to experience or witness antisemitism at least occasionally, which highlights the need to increase awareness to help identify and tackle antisemitism when it arises.

---

[11] JPR (2025) Two years after the 7 October 2023 attack

[12] Teacher Tapp (2025). Data was provided to the review from an unpublished 2025 survey conducted by Teacher Tapp. Teacher Tapp is a daily smartphone survey that polls over 10,000 practising teachers and due to volume does not publish all the data it collects. It relies on a fixed panel design, brief multiple-choice questions, rigorous demographic re-weighting, and next-day data release to track real-time sentiment and trends in education. More information can be found at https://teachertapp.com/why-our-data-is-representative/

[13] NEU (2026). The National Education Union conducted a short survey of a panel of members to inform their submission to the call for evidence, receiving over 1,000 responses in May 2026. These were reweighted in line with national figures from the School Workforce Census.

[14] UCL (2023) Continuity and Change: Ten years of teaching about the Holocaust in England's secondary schools

[15] NASUWT (2025) Antisemitism and discrimination in schools: survey findings

Trends in antisemitism

There are three main ways of measuring antisemitism: British attitudes, Jewish people's perceptions, and antisemitic incidents.

British attitudes

British attitudes relating to Jewish people and Israel show two broad trends. Anti-Jewish attitudes are typically less prevalent and have remained more stable, whereas anti-Israel sentiments are more prevalent and have been increasing.

For example, in 2025 an estimated 3% of British adults disagreed with the question "I am just as open to having Jewish friends as I am to have friends from other sections of British society".

This compares to an estimated 25% of British adults who disagree with the statement "I am comfortable spending time with people who openly support Israel". This rises to 49% for those aged 18-24.[16]

Anti-Israel attitudes have distinctly increased over time. In 2020, 23% agreed with the statement "Israel treats the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews", which increased to 45% in 2025.[17] The prevalence of beliefs such as these, which could be regarded as antisemitic according to the IHRA definition, demonstrate the difficulty faced by schools and colleges in tackling antisemitism.

A lower estimate of 13% of the population could be classed as anti-Jewish and 33% as anti-Israel, based on holding consistent negative attitudes.[18] The size of both groups has increased since 2020, especially amongst younger age groups.[19]

Although anti-Jewish and anti-Israel attitudes are widespread, certain groups are disproportionately more likely to hold them. These include those with 'very left' or 'very right' political views and those identifying as Muslim.[20]

---

[16] YouGov (2025) Judaism & Jewish People (Antisemitism Barometer)

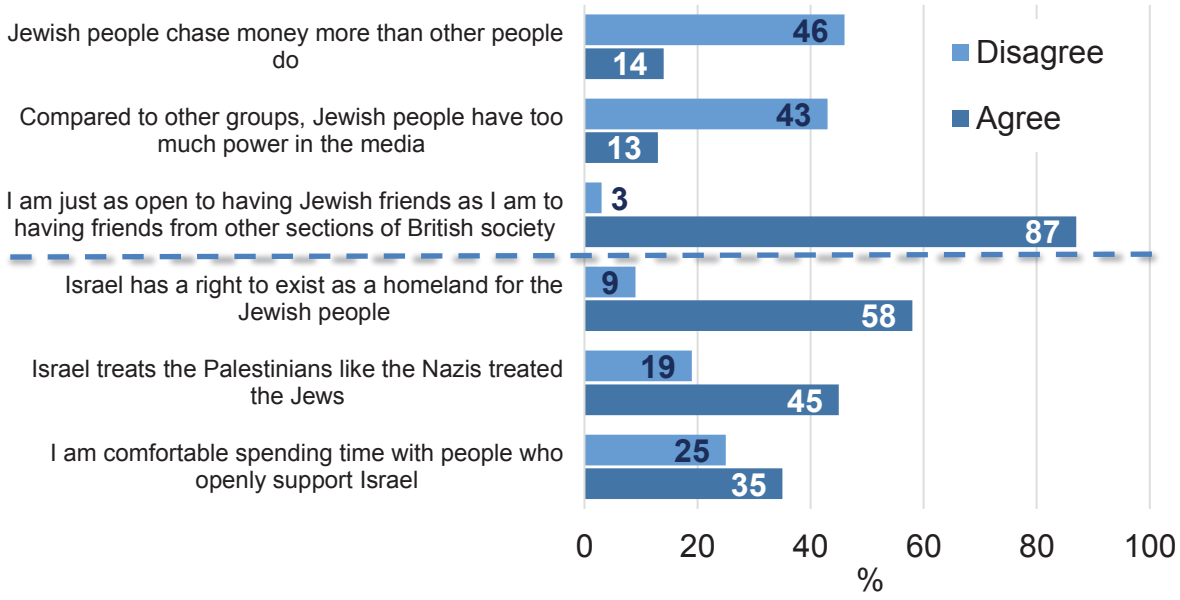
[17] YouGov (2025) Judaism & Jewish People (Antisemitism Barometer), CST / YouGov (2020) Antisemitism Barometer

[18] JPR (2017) Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain

[19] Allington (2026) Antisemitic attitudes and anti-Jewish crime in the UK

[20] JPR (2017) Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain

Figure 2: British attitudes towards Jewish people and Israel, estimated % of Great Britain, 2025



Source: JPR (2017) Antisemitism in contemporary Great Britain

Perceptions from Jewish people

Concerns over antisemitism have been high and increasing over the last two decades, with significant increases following key political and global events.

In 2025, an estimated 82% of Jewish people viewed antisemitism as a problem in the UK. Between 2012 and 2025, the proportion of British Jews viewing antisemitism as a problem almost doubled, from 48% to 82%. During this time the proportion viewing antisemitism as a *'very big problem'* also increased four-fold, from 11% in 2012 to 47% in 2025 - with notable increases since 2023.[21]

Antisemitic incidents[22]

Incidents reported to the Community Security Trust (CST) (a charity that protects British Jews from terrorism and antisemitism) have been increasing over the past 10 years, with a notable increase since 7 October 2023. Prior to this, the number of incidents were below 2,000 per year, but they have since roughly doubled since 2021 and remain comparatively high. The latest figures report 3,700 incidents in

[21] JPR (2025) Two years after the 7 October 2023 attack

[22] Definition: Community Security Trust classifies an antisemitic incident as any malicious act aimed at Jewish people, organisations or property, where there is evidence that the incident has antisemitic motivation or content, or that the victim was targeted because they are (or are believed to be) Jewish.

2025, with online antisemitism accounting for 42%, and children being the victims in 18% of incidents where the age was known.

In 2025, 204 antisemitic incidents targeting schools were recorded (compared to 266 incidents in 2024), the majority involving abusive behaviour (151 cases), alongside 28 assaults, 16 threats, and 9 cases of damage or desecration. Around 50 incidents occurred at Jewish schools, and 70 incidents involved Jewish students travelling to and from school.[23]

For incidents that occurred on Transport for London (TfL) in 2025, under-18s were disproportionately over-represented amongst both victims and offenders – children were targeted in 49% of incidents where age was known (49 out of the 100). Additionally, of the 419 reported incidents of antisemitic hate crimes on TfL over a two-year period (2024 to 2026), one in five victims were young people aged under 18 (20%).[24]

In 2024, 23% of Jewish parents reported that their child had experienced antisemitism at school, with children attending mainstream schools more likely to experience antisemitism (reported by 21% of the parents) than those in Jewish schools (reported by 3%).[25] However, incidents during travel to school are more commonly reported by pupils attending Jewish schools.

The proportion of British Jews overall who said they experienced at least one incident was higher in 2024 than all previous years, except 2021, with a notable increase in verbal and online antisemitism. Incidents were concentrated in London and Manchester.[26]

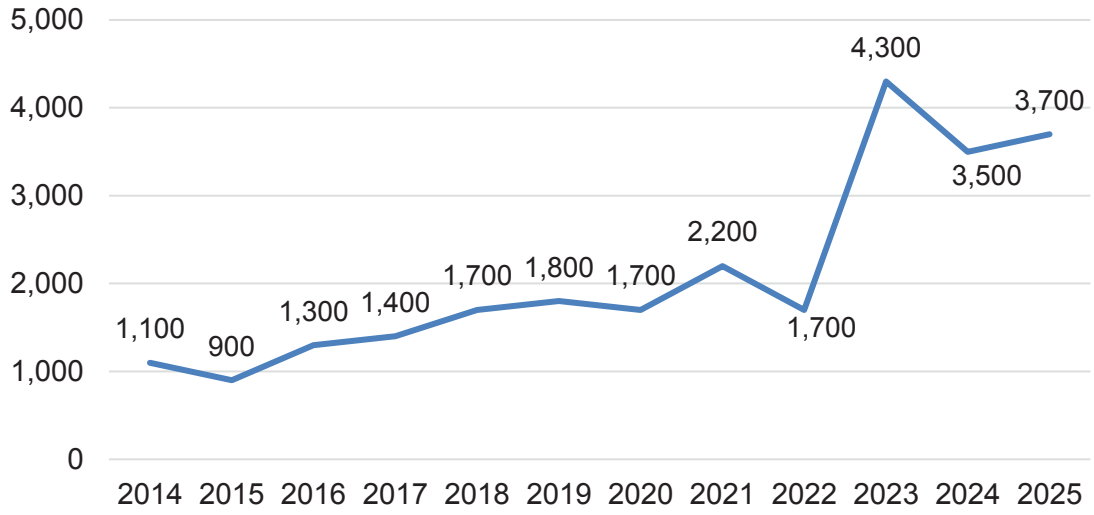
[23] CST (2025) – Antisemitic incidents

[24] Home Office (2025) Internal analysis of hate crime data

[25] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools

[26] JPR (2025) Two years after the 7 October 2023 attack

Figure 3: Number of reported antisemitic incidents between 2014-2025



Source: CST (2025) Antisemitic incidents 2025

Call for evidence

The call for evidence provided an opportunity to gather a range of experiences, perspectives and evidence about antisemitism in schools and colleges. Through contributions from learners, parents, staff, leaders and wider stakeholders, the review has developed a greater understanding of the challenges that exist and identified effective approaches to tackling them.

Ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to share their views helped make the review inclusive, evidence-based and grounded in the realities of schools and colleges, providing a strong foundation for the review's recommendations.

The call for evidence covered five key areas:

1. Identifying, reporting, and recording antisemitism
2. Responding to and addressing incidents
3. Staff knowledge and training
4. Preventing antisemitism
5. External engagement and influence

The call for evidence received 587 responses, with the majority made in an individual capacity (87%) and the remainder representing organisations (13%). Just over half of responses were from parents and carers (52%), with the other half included students and a range of professionals such as teachers, academics and governors. Responses mostly related to antisemitism within non-Jewish schools (c70%), with the remainder relating to colleges or the education system more broadly.

Thematic and sentiment analysis was used to assess evidence from stakeholder engagement, email submissions and the call for evidence hosted on Citizen Space.

Methodology

Research design

The call for evidence was used to collect qualitative and quantitative information from stakeholders across schools and colleges. Prior to the launch of the call for evidence, a series of engagement meetings were held with a range of stakeholders, including schools, colleges, Jewish representative organisations and other relevant institutions. These discussions provided valuable insights into the issues and challenges relating to antisemitism in educational settings and helped inform the design of the survey.

Data collection

Responses were invited from a wide range of stakeholder groups, including:

- parents and carers;
- children and young people;
- teachers, senior leaders and other school or college staff;
- local authorities;
- school trusts, governing bodies, proprietors of educational establishments and faith bodies;
- third sector organisations, including charities, voluntary organisations, faith organisations and community groups; and
- educational representative organisations, professional bodies and trade unions.

The call for evidence was open between 29 April 2026 and 1 July 2026. During this period, individuals and organisations were invited to submit responses through the survey.

Data Analysis

A mixed-methods approach was used to analyse responses.

Qualitative responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns and issues raised by respondents. Responses were reviewed and coded to group common topics and experiences, enabling key themes to be identified across stakeholder groups. Sentiment analysis was also applied to support understanding of the overall tone and perspectives expressed within the responses.

Quantitative analysis was undertaken to summarise response patterns and understand the distribution of views across respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate response frequencies and proportions where relevant.

Limitations

The data reflects the experiences and views of those who chose to respond and may not be representative of all individuals or organisations. The thematic analysis also risks misinterpreting some responses, but quality assurance checks were carried out to ensure the overall themes identified were robust.

In addition, 158 responses used a template provided by an external organisation for at least one of the free text questions. This provided a detailed critique of the review, including concerns about the consultation framework, the use of the IHRA definition, the distinction between Zionism and Judaism, and the potential impact on political discussion in schools. As a result, a significant number of submissions were broadly similar where the template was used. Where consultation questions were left unanswered, those responses were not included in question-specific thematic analysis. Any substantive responses provided were considered alongside other evidence and were reflected in the conclusions where relevant.

Key conclusions

The following presents key insights from the non-free text responses:[27]

Prevalence: the experiences of antisemitism in education settings were relatively common among respondents. 39% reported experiencing it at least yearly (including 9% who reported experiencing it weekly or daily) and this increases to 45% for respondents who were professionals within schools and colleges.

Perpetrators of antisemitism: the most frequently identified perpetrators of antisemitic incidents were pupils and students (34%), staff (16%) and members of the public (14%).

Barriers to reporting: the top three reasons cited as barriers to reporting were concerns that incidents would not be taken seriously or acted upon (38%), lack of clarity and confidence about what constitutes antisemitism (37%) and fear of negative response from pupils or staff (35%).

Identifying incidents: school and college professionals reported that staff observation was the most common mechanism for identifying incidents (40%), followed by reports from victims (35%), reports from other pupils and students (24%) and complaints from parents (19%). This highlights the important role played by frontline staff in identifying and responding to incidents of antisemitism.

Recording of incidents: 18% of professionals reported that antisemitism was recorded as a specific category, with a further 39% saying such incidents are included as part of a broader category of discrimination.

Support for those affected: the most common forms of support for those affected by antisemitic incidents are pastoral support (28%), support from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or safeguarding team (21%) and referral to mental health or wellbeing services (13%), with a further 15% of respondents said there was no specific support available.

Responses to antisemitism: of respondents who were able to rate schools' and colleges' ability to respond effectively to antisemitic incidents, 70% rated it as very good (31%), good (22%) or average (17%). The remaining 30% rate it as poor or very poor.

---

[27] The figures presented are calculated for each question individually and response rates vary between questions.

Confidence in response systems: significant concerns were raised about reporting and response systems. Nearly half of respondents (49%) believed antisemitism is not treated in the same way as other forms of racism or prejudice. However, this differed significantly by professionals (36%), pupils, students and parents (56%) and those identifying as Jewish (66%). Concerns that incidents would not be taken seriously emerged as the most frequently cited barrier to reporting and recording incidents.

Confidence in addressing antisemitism: roughly three quarters (74%) of school and college professionals reported being confident in addressing antisemitism when it arises in the context of complex or sensitive discussions, with 12% not being confident. Where they are not confident in dealing with an instance of antisemitism, the key sources of support were reported to be the DSL or safeguarding team (43%), a senior leader in the school or college (41%) or an external specialist organisation or charity (24%). 16% said they would use Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

Responsibility for managing antisemitism: nearly half of school and college professionals (47%) identified the DSL as responsible for managing allegations of antisemitism. Headteachers or principals (38%) and other senior leaders (32%) were also frequently identified. However, 10% believed there was no clearly designated individual responsible, and 12% were unsure.

Awareness of the IHRA definition: overall, 78% of school and college professionals reported being aware of the IHRA definition of antisemitism. However, despite high levels of awareness, only 24% of professionals said that their organisation uses it.

Challenge to effective responses: the key reasons given for not responding effectively to antisemitism were insufficient staff training, knowledge, or expertise (31%), uncertainty about how to identify antisemitism (25%) and uncertainty about what actions to take once an issue is identified (23%). This highlights staff capability as a key challenge.

Inclusion in relevant policies: one in three respondents (33%) disagreed that antisemitism is considered and included in relevant policies to teach pupils and students about online safety, tackling dis- and misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Training: 42% of professionals reported that their school or college offered some form of anti-racism or wider prejudice training in the last 12 months (mandatory, targeted, or optional). However, 37% reported offering no such training, and 21% were unsure.

In contrast, only 9% reported offering training specifically focused on antisemitism and 5% saying it was mandatory for all staff, suggesting antisemitism training is significantly less established than broader anti-racism and prejudice training.

Targeted training: 69% of anti-racism and prejudice training was aimed at teachers. Training specifically targeting senior leaders or support staff was relatively uncommon (both 6%).

Training material: 29% was developed in-house, 19% was provided by external trainers or consultants and 21% from a range of other external organisations.

Frequency of training: annual training was the most common offer for anti-racism and prejudice training, reported by 55% or professionals, with 11% reporting termly and 7% one off training.

Working with external organisations: of respondents who rated their experience of working with organisations on antisemitism, over 80% reported a positive experience working with:

- police or local safeguarding partnerships;
- academy trusts or governing bodies;
- Jewish community or representative organisations;
- equality, anti-hate, or anti-bullying organisations;
- training or education providers;
- safeguarding, wellbeing, or inclusion support services;
- faith-based or interfaith organisations;
- legal or professional advisory organisations; and/or
- parents, community, or voluntary sector groups.

The three organisations where respondents most commonly reported negative experiences were DfE (27%), Ofsted (32%) and unions (40%). Where respondents provided additional comments, concerns focused on perceived shortcomings in organisational responses to antisemitism, including views that engagement was not translating into meaningful action, that some organisations had exacerbated tensions, and that interventions had led to feelings of intimidation, fear and resentment.

Free text questions: theme analysis

The following presents a summary of the thematic analysis conducted on the free-text questions. A full breakdown of the key themes from each question is included in the accompanying evidence annex.

Responses identified a strong consensus that effective approaches to tackling antisemitism are characterised by clear leadership, explicit policies, timely responses to incidents, and a whole-school culture that promotes respect.

Education was commonly viewed as a key preventative measure, with respondents highlighting the value of staff training, curriculum content on Judaism and antisemitism, assemblies, workshops and educational responses to incidents. However, concerns were raised about inconsistent implementation of existing policies, limited staff confidence in recognising contemporary forms of antisemitism, and overreliance on sanctions without addressing underlying attitudes.

Political impartiality guidance was viewed as useful in principle. However, uncertainty was expressed about its practical application, particularly in relation to discussions about Israel and Palestine. Respondents highlighted the need for greater staff capability and confidence, particularly in navigating issues connected to the State of Israel, Zionism[28] and the Middle East. Respondents highlighted the need for practical training, clearer guidance and specialist expertise to help staff distinguish antisemitism from legitimate political expression while managing sensitive discussions impartially.

There was a consistent message that antisemitism should be treated as a safeguarding and wellbeing issue, supported by stronger education, monitoring and support for Jewish pupils, students and staff, while ensuring clear and balanced approaches to controversial or politically sensitive topics.

[28] Zionism is commonly understood as the Jewish national movement supporting Jewish self-determination and the establishment and continued existence of Israel as a Jewish state. The term includes a range of religious, secular, political and cultural perspectives and does not necessarily imply support for Israeli government or policy.

1. Understanding of antisemitism

> *"Most people instinctively understand that being labelled racist carries moral weight and social consequence. By contrast, there are instances where accusations of antisemitism are dismissed, minimised, or even worn as a badge of honour by those who do not fully grasp - or refuse to acknowledge - the prejudice involved."*[29] - Call for evidence respondent

This chapter assesses understanding of antisemitism in schools and colleges and identifies how greater use of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism and improved training could strengthen responses.

There is a strong commitment across our schools and colleges to tackle racism and promote inclusion, yet a persistent theme identified in this review is inconsistent understanding of what constitutes antisemitism among professionals. The review also heard concern that the term 'antisemitism' is not always understood as hostility or prejudice directed at Jewish people and therefore can be dismissed as opinion or political disagreement rather than recognised as racism and prejudice.

The call for evidence found that 74% of school and college professionals reported being confident in addressing antisemitism when it arises in the context of complex or sensitive discussions. Similarly, the NEU survey of over 2,000 professionals found 73% were confident.[30] However, this does not appear to consistently translate into positive outcomes for victims when this review considered the experiences of Jewish learners and staff.

The call for evidence found that leaders and professionals are uncertain identifying antisemitism that is indirect, coded, or intertwined with wider political discourse. This can result in inconsistent decision-making, or a failure to recognise incidents as antisemitic at all. Unfamiliarity with certain phrases, symbols, and narratives including those that are subtle or context-dependent can prevent schools and colleges from identifying and preventing antisemitism effectively.

In some settings, limited direct exposure to Jewish perspectives, such as where there are few or no Jewish learners or staff, reduces opportunities for understanding and inclusion. The call for evidence found that professionals did not always understand why something might be perceived as anti-Jewish or the impact it was having on Jewish learners. This was voiced by one respondent:

---

[29] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[30] NEU submission to the independent review (1 July 2026)

> *"Our voices on this topic seem to carry no weight. We are not believed. We are told by others what is antisemitic and what isn't - never mind the official definition or how unsafe we are made to feel".*[31]

Stakeholders report challenges in grasping the diversity of Jewish identity, including distinctions between religion, ethnicity, and connections to the State of Israel, which can hinder appropriate responses.

These factors contribute to a systemic gap in knowledge and capability, increasing the risk of inconsistent, ineffective, or even harmful approaches to addressing antisemitism in schools and colleges. This review finds compelling evidence for the need for adoption of a consistent definition and targeted training to ensure school and college staff can understand, recognise, and respond to antisemitism effectively.

Antisemitism definition

"If we can't define the term 'antisemitism' then we will continue to speak past each other."[32] – Call for evidence respondent

The UK Government adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in 2016.[33]

Whilst some schools and colleges have adopted IHRA's working definition in their policies and processes (e.g. Outwood Grange Academies Trust[34]), this is not widespread. The call for evidence found that whilst most professionals are familiar with the IHRA working definition (78%), only 24% said that their school or college uses this definition, suggesting there is no single, system-wide reference point for educating, identifying, and responding to antisemitism in schools and colleges.

This review recognises that leaders are often required to make difficult and nuanced judgments in sensitive and polarised contexts. The IHRA working definition could provide a reference point for schools and colleges to help understand these boundaries.

In October 2020, the then Secretary of State for Education, Sir Gavin Williamson CBE MP, asked universities to adopt this definition to bring consistency and improve understanding across the higher education sector. This was supported by HM Government's independent advisor on antisemitism, Lord (John) Mann, who felt the definition "*can be used as an educational tool for all members of staff and students*

---

[31] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[32] Submission to the independent review (9 June 2026)

[33] UK Government's adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism

[34] Outwood Grange Academies Trust

and can give Jewish students and staff confidence in relevant processes."[35] As a result, most universities in England have now adopted the definition.[36]

Adoption signalled a clear institutional commitment to tackling antisemitism and provided reassurance to Jewish students, parents and the wider community. Collective efforts by organisations such as the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) and the Community Security Trust (CST), alongside adoption, have improved understanding and encouraged more action by universities. This review believes that a similar approach should be taken in schools and colleges.

The review is aware that there is no consensus on the IHRA working definition. Some stakeholders who have fed into the review raised concerns that it could detract from dealing with antisemitism in practice due to disagreements about its application. The review recognises that the word "working" in the IHRA working definition is important, reflecting both the complexity of antisemitism, its capacity to evolve across different contexts, and the limits of any single definition in capturing every circumstance in which it may arise.

The definition should therefore be understood as a practical guide to support understanding and discussion, alongside its accompanying examples, rather than as an exhaustive or legally definitive statement.

Responses to the call for evidence also highlighted concerns that the IHRA definition may be interpreted as limiting legitimate criticism of the actions of the State of Israel. However, the definition recognises that criticism of the State of Israel, similar to that levelled against any other democratic country, is not antisemitic.

In applying the IHRA definition, it is important to distinguish between hostility towards Jewish people and debate about the nature of the State of Israel. Statements that deny Jewish people rights afforded to other groups, or that advocate the destruction of Israel because it is a Jewish state, may be considered antisemitic. Criticism of Zionism,[37] advocacy for alternative models for resolving the Israel-Palestine conflict, or criticism of Israeli government policies may not, in themselves, be antisemitic.

---

[35] Understanding Jewish Experience in Higher Education: Parliamentary Taskforce on Antisemitism in Higher Education, (2023).

[36] IHRA Campaign - UJS includes a list of UK universities which have adopted the IHRA definition.

[37] Antizionists can express views that include a deep hatred for the existence of Israel and of those who believe in its right to exist as a Jewish homeland. Such views may be antisemitic, in certain contexts. There are also examples where Zionism is used as a synonym for 'Jewish' to hide anti-Jewish hatred within lawful political expression.

Furthermore, the IHRA definition is a working definition and is not a proxy for the legal test that would be applied by the courts in considering whether a person's statement of their beliefs is protected under the Equality Act 2010 or Human Rights Act 1998. As many universities have recognised, assessment of such statements requires careful consideration of context, intent, and impact, in line with schools' and colleges' obligations under these Acts and alongside colleges' duties to protect freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Adoption of the IHRA working definition should not be treated as a standalone measure of a setting's commitment to tackling antisemitism. Its value lies in providing schools and colleges with a shared reference point to identify behaviours which, depending on the circumstances, could constitute antisemitism. To achieve this, leaders must understand the benefits and the limitations of the definition and be supported to apply it carefully in context.

It is important that school and college adoption of the definition is used as an opportunity to undertake training and encourage discussion among senior leaders and staff.

Recommendation 1

The Secretary of State for Education should encourage all schools and colleges to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

The definition needs to be well understood, which is why it is important that it is integrated into further training on antisemitism.

Training

"There is a clear need for mandatory evidence-based training on contemporary antisemitism for school leaders, safeguarding staff, governors, and classroom teachers"[38] - Call for evidence respondent

At present, training and professional development on antisemitism is variable. The call for evidence found that 42% of professionals reported their school or college had offered some form of anti-racism or wider prejudice training in the previous twelve months. However, it is not known whether professionals receive training on antisemitism as part of this provision.

[38] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

The call for evidence found that only 9% of professionals reported being offered training specifically focused on antisemitism, with 5% saying it was mandatory for all staff. Similarly, the NEU polled over 2000 teachers in May 2026 as part of their call for evidence submission and found that 17% had undertaken antisemitism training through their school in the past twelve months, whether standalone (1%) or as part of broader anti-racism training (16%).[39] Both sets of data suggest that dedicated training on antisemitism is limited across schools and colleges.

This finding was echoed in responses to the call for evidence and by stakeholders, particularly from the Jewish community, who expressed concern that antisemitism is often overlooked within broader anti-racism and prejudice training. Some felt that anti-racism training was insufficient for addressing antisemitism, with concerns that it dilutes specific Jewish experiences through 'whataboutery'.[40] This can inadvertently contribute to a situation in which antisemitism is insufficiently understood relative to other forms of racism, despite the particular characteristics and harms it presents.

Similarly, teacher training does not consistently equip new entrants to the profession with the knowledge required to recognise and respond to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice in educational settings.

This review is clear that there is no hierarchy of racism or prejudice; all forms should be challenged and eradicated with equal commitment. However, equal commitment does not mean identical treatment, nor does it imply that all forms of racism are understood in the same way. Antisemitism has distinct characteristics, and it is for that reason the review recommends targeted training in various forms to ensure that Jewish people experience the same level of protection, inclusion and understanding as other groups.

[39] NEU submission to the independent review (1 July 2026)

[40] 'Whataboutery' occurs when efforts to address a particular form of racism, such as antisemitism, are challenged on the basis that other forms of racism also exist and should be given equal attention, rather than engaging with the specific risks, harms or evidence relating to the issue at hand.

Recommendation 2

The Department for Education should ensure that school and college leaders, staff and trainee teachers receive training in understanding antisemitism.

To enable this:

a. The Department for Education should commission the preparation of a dedicated training package on antisemitism for school and college leaders and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs).

b. The Department for Education should encourage school and college leaders to integrate understanding of antisemitism within safeguarding, equalities, and anti-racism training. This should encompass all staff and others working in schools and colleges, including support staff, governors, academy members and trustees.

c. The Department for Education should ensure teachers have a good understanding of antisemitism delivered through initial teacher training and the early career framework for schools and initial teacher training for further education teachers.

2. Recognising and responding to antisemitism

"Jewish families have stopped reporting because previous reports went nowhere." - Call for evidence respondent

This chapter examines how schools and colleges identify, record and respond to antisemitism through safeguarding, behaviour and anti-bullying frameworks.

Schools and colleges have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.[41] Settings must identify, assess and respond to harm, including harm arising from discrimination, harassment and abuse. Within this context, antisemitism may constitute a safeguarding concern where it impacts a child's safety, wellbeing or ability to participate fully in education.

Schools and colleges should recognise that antisemitism can cause harm even where there is no identifiable Jewish victim. When prejudice is normalised, it can contribute to a culture in which hatred is tolerated and undermine schools' and colleges' responsibilities to promote inclusion, equality and respect. Safeguarding concerns may also arise from exposure to antisemitism, through repeated incidents, online content or aspects of school or college culture, depending on the nature and impact of that exposure.

However, not all incidents of antisemitism will meet formal safeguarding thresholds. While some may require a safeguarding response, many will also need to be addressed through schools' and colleges' behaviour processes, and some may appropriately be managed through both routes.

Antisemitism as a form of harm

Evidence submitted to this review suggests that antisemitism is not consistently recognised as an issue that may, in some circumstances, raise safeguarding concerns. Incidents tend to be addressed only through behaviour or disciplinary processes, even where their seriousness or cumulative effect has a significant impact on Jewish learners' safety, wellbeing, identity and participation.

Applying a safeguarding lens where appropriate, alongside behavioural responses, can help ensure that both the harm experienced by victims and the factors influencing those displaying antisemitic behaviour are addressed through early intervention, support and education.

---

[41] Under safeguarding legislation, including the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)

KCSIE explains and supports compliance with statutory duties on safeguarding which apply to schools and colleges. Evidence submitted to this review indicated that some stakeholders would welcome more explicit reference to antisemitism within KCSIE. They suggested that explicit recognition that antisemitism may, in some circumstances, raise safeguarding concerns would support more consistent recognition, reporting and response.

The response to KCSIE 2026 consultation represents a positive shift in recognising the role of racism, and other forms of prejudice within safeguarding. It acknowledges stakeholder concern about the limited reference to these issues in previous guidance and introduces strengthened references to hate, extremism and harmful ideologies. It explicitly includes racism within preventative education and emphasises the importance of addressing discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour as part of a whole-school safeguarding culture, supported by signposting to resources such as the DfE Educate Against Hate website.

However, these changes remain primarily focused on prevention, culture and education. Antisemitism is not explicitly recognised as a form of harm that may affect pupil or student safety, wellbeing or sense of belonging, nor is there clear reference to antisemitic behaviour as a potential indicator of wider safeguarding concerns in some circumstances. This needs to change.

Working together to safeguard children

The updates to *Working together to safeguard children* include stronger recognition of the role of racism and discrimination in shaping children's experiences of harm, vulnerability and access to support. It places expectations on leaders to build inclusive, anti-discriminatory cultures and on practitioners to identify and address discrimination within safeguarding assessment and decision-making.

There is a read-across between the two frameworks, and so greater clarity within KCSIE would support schools and colleges to translate these expectations into consistent operational practice. Clearer guidance on recognising and responding to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice would strengthen consistency.

Recommendation 3

The Department for Education should strengthen *Keeping children safe in education* to make clear that racism and prejudice, including antisemitism, may constitute harm. The guidance should make clear that early identification, challenge and intervention are important safeguarding responses, where appropriate.

Online harm

In some cases, antisemitic behaviour may indicate that a child or young person has been exposed to harmful ideologies, extremist content, conspiracy narratives, online influence or other factors that warrant further assessment and support. The call for evidence and stakeholder engagement suggested a need to improve staff confidence to respond to online antisemitic abuse. Ineffective practice included treating online abuse as generic misbehaviour, failing to categorise incidents as antisemitic, or even blaming pupils for posting about their Jewish or Israeli identity. Due to the unique characteristics of antisemitism, there is a need for greater professional awareness of how it manifests online, including the ease with which children and young people are exposed to it.

Recommendation 4

Schools and colleges' online safety policies, safeguarding policies, and associated staff training should ensure that staff are appropriately informed about the nature and risks of harmful antisemitic content that children and young people may encounter online.

Online harms are covered further in section 3 on prevention.

Antisemitism as distinct from bullying

Antisemitism is primarily addressed through the lens of anti-bullying within the Department for Education (DfE) *Behaviour in schools guidance*, rather than as a distinct form of racism and prejudice with specific characteristics and impacts. This reflects the statutory requirement for all schools to have a behaviour policy that prevents bullying, which includes 'prejudice-based bullying'.[42] This approach may make it less likely that schools identify and respond effectively to antisemitic

[42] Schools have duties, including under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying, including prejudice-based bullying.

incidents that fall outside of a bullying definition, such as one-off incidents or exposure online.

Current DfE guidance does not address how behaviour policies should cover antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice, nor does it set out effective strategies to address such incidents.[43] Although, the behaviour in schools guidance states a behaviour policy must include measures which aim to *"prevent all forms of bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)",* school leaders are not supported to recognise that behaviours rooted in prejudice are distinct. They can be exacerbated by past trauma, existing power imbalances, the cumulative impact of incidents and wider contextual or environmental factors.

The DfE's *Preventing and tackling bullying guidance* for schools acknowledges prejudice-based bullying and encourages schools to:

> *"openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference…Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable."*

However, it does not support staff to identify such behaviours or encourage schools and colleges to define antisemitic behaviour and other forms of hatred and prejudice in their behaviour, anti-bullying and safeguarding policies.

Guidance is needed to support school leaders to respond effectively and consistently.

Recommendation 5

The Department for Education should update the behaviour and preventing bullying guidance for schools to include advice on identifying, preventing and responding to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice, including setting out expected standards of support and good practice for victims of abuse.

For colleges, there is no statutory or non-statutory guidance that sets out how behaviour or bullying should be managed. However, colleges' governing bodies are responsible for the conduct and management of their institutions, including setting

[43] DfE (2015) Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for governing bodies and DfE (2024) Behaviour in schools guidance.

and enforcing standards of behaviour.[44] They also must comply with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring that behaviour rules and disciplinary action are applied fairly.

Colleges should also ensure that their policies and procedures enable staff to identify and respond effectively to antisemitic abuse, harassment and intimidation, recognising that these behaviours are distinct from general bullying and can include one-off incidents, online harms, and conduct shaped by wider contextual factors.

Recommendation 6

College leaders should consider if their behaviour policy and student code of conduct includes steps to identify, prevent and respond to antisemitic and other forms of abuse, harassment and intimidation.

Reporting

Respondents to the call for evidence indicated that antisemitic behaviour that is perceived as isolated, 'low-level', or insufficiently serious to meet the threshold for repeated or targeted conduct is not reported.

In practice, this means that less overt forms of antisemitism, such as stereotypes, 'jokes', or casual remarks, are rarely reported, recorded or escalated. This is significant given that, as noted earlier in the review, 85% of antisemitic incidents witnessed by UCAS applicants took this form. As a result, reporting data may provide an incomplete picture of the true prevalence of antisemitism, limiting institutions' ability to identify patterns, assess risk or take preventative action.

Reporting systems should enable schools and colleges to recognise and respond to antisemitic behaviour or expression wherever it arises, including where its impact is on the wider culture of the setting rather than a named victim. The normalisation of prejudicial language and behaviour, particularly online, can further discourage reporting.

One respondent to the call for evidence provided this example regarding the normalisation of antisemitism – *"upon hearing a year 7 student say he wanted to build a gas chamber and chain up Jews, a Jewish boy in year 7 failed to report it*

[44] Under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and through their instruments of government, governing bodies in colleges are responsible for setting and enforcing standards of behaviour, including for incidents involving harassment or abuse, such as antisemitism.

because he said "it's normal here, I hear older kids making Nazi jokes all the time"".[45]

In addition, the information collected via the call for evidence suggests that a lack of confidence and understanding of antisemitism amongst learners, staff and senior leaders contributes to inconsistent reporting. The evidence suggests that uncertainty about what constitutes antisemitism can hinder reporting, with 37% of respondents identifying this as a barrier.

For example, many respondents said that some incidents are not taken seriously because they are viewed solely as political expression rather than potential antisemitism. They highlighted cases involving conspiracy narratives, accusations of dual loyalty, and situations where hostility toward Jewish people was expressed or manifested in discussions relating to Zionism, the State of Israel and Palestine.

In parallel, learners may be reluctant to report incidents, especially where they perceive that no meaningful action will be taken. The UCAS survey found around half of those who witnessed or experienced antisemitism did not report it to their school or college, mainly because they felt the incident was not serious enough or believed it would not be taken seriously. This is echoed by the call for evidence, which found that 38% of respondents did not report incidents because they were concerned that they would not be taken seriously or acted upon.

Furthermore, reporting incidents can be difficult when there are few Jewish learners, as it is often assumed they made the report making them easily identifiable.

This may explain why 35% of respondents to the call for evidence who answered the question about barriers to reporting or recording antisemitic incidents cited fear of a negative response from pupils or staff. One respondent reported that *“on one occasion my son didn't want to report the incident as he was scared the boy would stab him after school if he reported it”.*[46]

These factors contribute to a reporting gap, limiting safeguarding oversight and effective behaviour responses. Although a requirement to escalate and record all offensive comments may be burdensome on school and college staff to implement, they may need to consider a tiered, proportionate response that supports the ability to manage incidents at the right level. Any discouragement to report ‘low level’ antisemitic behaviour may result in schools or colleges not recognising the cumulative impact incidents have on the wider setting culture.

Most importantly, it should be straightforward for all learners to report antisemitic abuse. They should feel assured they will be listened to and incidents acted on,

---

[45] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[46] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

without fear of further bullying or discrimination, and so confidential disclosure mechanisms need to be available. This should include antisemitic abuse which may have occurred outside school or college, for example, online or when travelling to school or college.

The aim of encouraging reporting is not to create a punitive or surveillance culture, but to ensure that incidents which might otherwise go unnoticed are understood and addressed. Reporting mechanisms should be proportionate, supportive and focused on learning, prevention, restorative justice and victim support not simply punishment. Many parents who responded to the call for evidence reported incidents regarding their children; they often did not want to formally identify the perpetrator and valued preventative work, such as assemblies or the use of tuturial or pastoral time, over punishment.

Without reporting, schools and colleges can struggle to identify patterns of harm, understand the scale of the issue, the cumulative impact of 'low level' incidents, or provide appropriate support to those affected.

Recording

"The cumulative effect is invisible in the data, but the lived experience is relentless"[47] – Call for evidence respondent

Schools and colleges are encouraged to have strong and effective systems for data capture, including safeguarding and behaviour incident data. However, there is no statutory requirement to record antisemitic incidents. This leaves decisions about whether such incidents are recorded dependent on interpretation. Additionally, some incidents may be managed exclusively within behaviour systems and not included in safeguarding records, limiting consistency in oversight, pattern recognition and early intervention.

The expectations on the sector to record racist incidents, including anti-Jewish racism, has differed over time. The DfE's *Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies* guidance for schools states that they should *"develop a consistent approach to monitoring bullying incidents"* but also says *"others do not want to keep written records."* Advice such as this can create ambiguity and undermines safeguarding consistency.

Schools and colleges are encouraged to have strong and effective systems for data capture, including safeguarding and behaviour incident data. However, there is no statutory requirement to ensure the recording of antisemitic incidents. Incidents

[47] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 should be recorded distinctly, alongside safeguarding, behaviour or bullying categorisation that may apply. This is because such incidents may constitute discrimination or harassment, which carry specific legal duties.

Furthermore, the review found that antisemitic incidents may be recorded under the broader category of 'racism', making it difficult to establish their prevalence and identify trends over time. Recording systems should be able to capture both incidents involving an identifiable victim and wider manifestations of antisemitism within the setting and it is important to distinguish between the nature of the incident (e.g. anti-Jewish racism) and the type of incident (e.g. jokes, name-calling, verbal abuse etc.). This will help schools and colleges identify patterns over time and take preventative action, including where concerns are not raised directly by a victim.

Having antisemitic incidents recorded does not automatically equate to an issue in a school or college. Rather, being more transparent about antisemitic incidents is a sign of a healthy organisation wanting to take action to tackle it.

Recommendation 7

Schools and colleges should establish clear and accessible systems for reporting, recording and monitoring antisemitic incidents. To enable this:

a. Schools and colleges should support peer reporting and anonymous disclosures, and signpost learners to information about available support services (such as Community Security Trust).

b. Schools and colleges recording systems should include a specific category for antisemitic incidents, including the nature and type of incident, involving identifiable victims as well as wider manifestations of antisemitism.

Supporting victims

The evidence collected in the review shows the impact antisemitism is having on Jewish learners with harm manifesting as both mental and physical abuse, social exclusion and isolation.

Stakeholder engagement indicates a perception that schools and colleges are not adequately equipped to support learners who have experienced antisemitism or other hate-motivated incidents. The call for evidence has shown that 47% of respondents rated their school or college's ability to respond effectively to antisemitic incidents as average or poor and 35% of professionals believe antisemitism is not treated in the same way as other forms of racism and prejudice.

Stakeholders reported that behaviour policies can be too focused on the perpetrator and disciplinary action. Whilst it is right that antisemitic behaviour should be met with robust sanctions, policies and processes should set out expectations for supporting victims and safeguarding students who may be at risk of harm.

The call for evidence was primarily responded to by parents (52%), with many calling for restorative justice, assemblies and external speakers to be part of the solution – but also feeling ignored by the school or college when they put these suggestions forward.

The call for evidence also found that whilst victims received support from pastoral or safeguarding teams and health and wellbeing services, 15% of respondents said there was no specific support offered.

Support should be proportionate to the impact of the incident, recognising that even one-off or 'low-level' behaviour can have an impact on children and young people's wellbeing and belonging. Learners should be kept informed of actions taken, where appropriate, to reinforce confidence that incidents are taken seriously.

Early intervention for perpetrators

Following incidents of antisemitic abuse or other forms of harassment or bullying, staff should consider the behaviour itself and the motivations underlying it. While sanctions will often be appropriate, these must be accompanied by education and support provision for the child or young person responsible. This may include early interventions, engagement with parents or carers, and, where relevant, consideration of factors within and beyond the school or college environment. In doing so, schools and colleges may address the immediate behaviour and support positive attitude change.

In some cases, a child or young person expressing extremist or hate-based views may themselves be at risk of harm, exploitation, or manipulation. Antisemitic behaviour may be an early indicator of a child or young person's vulnerability to harmful influences, including extremist narratives or prejudicial attitudes encountered online, among peers or within the family. Where this behaviour suggests vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism, schools and colleges are already subject to the Prevent duty.[48]

Antisemitism is reflected in the *Prevent duty guidance* which identifies antisemitism as a cross-cutting feature of multiple terrorist ideologies, including Islamist, extreme

[48] Under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools and colleges must have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

right-wing and extreme left-wing narratives. It can also function as a driver of conspiracy thinking, grievance and, in some cases, the legitimisation of violence.

Evidence submitted to this review suggests "*Prevent does not work effectively for antisemitism*".[49] Respondents did not believe Prevent is the right process for managing most cases of antisemitic abuse in schools and colleges, but clarity is needed on when Prevent could and should play a part. It is not intended to be a default response to antisemitic incidents as, in most cases, such incidents can be appropriately addressed through existing behaviour and safeguarding management processes. It becomes relevant only when there are signs of potential radicalisation into terrorism.

Early school or college-based interventions or, in some circumstances, a referral to Prevent, may reduce the escalation of harmful attitudes or behaviours. Strengthening practice depends on improving staff confidence, to assess prejudice-based incidents as not only behavioural issues but also as potential safeguarding concerns.

Recommendation 8

The Home Office should work with the Department for Education to expand Prevent advice for schools and colleges, to provide clarity and support decision making on when antisemitism, and other themes relevant to extremist narratives, may be indicators of radicalisation risk.

[49] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

3. Prevention

"*What struck me most was that much of this [antisemitic] hatred came from a place of ignorance rather than pure malice*."[50] - Jonathan Frisher, student, Cheshire

Whilst it is important to respond effectively when antisemitism happens in schools and colleges, it is equally important to build strong foundations to prevent it from manifesting in the first place. A whole-setting approach can build understanding, challenge prejudice and create an inclusive environment in which antisemitism is less likely to emerge or become normalised.

This chapter explores how schools and colleges can prevent antisemitism through a whole-setting approach that considers culture, leadership, curriculum, social cohesion and learner engagement. It examines how the role of education helps in building understanding of Jewish identity, tackling prejudice, and creating inclusive environments in which antisemitism is less likely to emerge or become normalised.

Leadership and school and college culture

Evidence submitted to this review and stakeholder engagement, including from Ofsted and academy trusts, consistently highlights the critical role of leadership in preventing and tackling antisemitism. Effective leaders, whether senior leaders, governors or trustees, set the tone for what is expected, model appropriate behaviours, and establish the norms that shape everyday interactions across institutions.

Strong and visible leadership, underpinned by a culture of standing up against all forms of racism, including antisemitism, is a critical component of effective prevention in schools and colleges. There is some evidence to suggest that regular communication and consistent practice help to prevent discriminatory language or behaviour from emerging or becoming normalised. Additionally, a culture grounded in respect, inclusion and high expectations reduces the likelihood that antisemitism is dismissed as 'banter' or goes unchallenged. However, the review acknowledges there is limited evidence on 'what works' to support schools in colleges to foster such cultures, particularly in relation to tackling antisemitism.

Prevention is most effective when these values are embedded through systems, policies and routines, rather than relying on reactive responses alone. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires governing bodies of maintained schools, and proprietors of academies, and colleges to have due regard to the need to eliminate

[50] Independent review stakeholder meeting with the secretariat (8 June 2026)

unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in the exercise of their public functions. However, evidence from stakeholder meetings suggests that, in some settings these duties are not always fully understood or applied in relation to Jewish identity, particularly where there are few visibly Jewish staff or learners.

Stakeholders described examples where antisemitism was treated as less relevant in schools and colleges with low Jewish representation. This risks creating a reactive rather than preventative approach and overlooks the importance of building understanding of Jewish identity, Jewish life and antisemitism.

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination, harassment and victimisation in schools and colleges on the grounds of protected characteristics, including race and religion or belief. As Jewish identity may encompass both race and religion or belief, leadership approaches and equality policies should reflect this clearly so that the experiences and needs of Jewish learners and staff are properly recognised and addressed.

Effective leadership is therefore essential to embed respect for Jewish identity and understanding of antisemitism within the ethos, curriculum and wider life of the institution. To support this, schools and colleges should strengthen understanding of their responsibilities under the PSED and adopt a whole-institution approach that builds awareness, inclusion and respect, helping to prevent antisemitism before it occurs.

Recommendation 9

The Office for Equality and Opportunity should launch a cross-sector awareness campaign to reinforce Public Sector Equality Duty responsibilities with respect to Jewish identity, as both a race and religion, so that it is fully recognised within school and college policies and processes to meet equality and safeguarding duties.

Recommendation 10

The Department for Education should produce, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, good practice guidance to support school and college leaders in developing a coherent and sequenced approach to tackling antisemitism. This should include curriculum content and wider educational opportunities that support understanding of historical and contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, alongside the policies, processes and support needed to ensure a whole-institution response.

Curriculum, tutorial time and pastoral provision

"*There is a need to 'usualise' Jewish life through literature and historical integration, moving beyond a narrative centred solely on the Holocaust to build genuine empathy*."[51] – London Borough of Hackney

Tackling antisemitism through the curriculum and other learning opportunities is an essential element of a whole-school or college approach. In schools, pupils may learn what antisemitism is (for example through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) or citizenship education), how it has developed historically (for example through Holocaust education), and how it can appear today in subtle as well as explicit forms (for example through media literacy).

Learning about antisemitism may also contribute to schools' (and some colleges') promotion of fundamental British values, particularly by supporting learners' understanding of tolerance and mutual respect. Evidence submitted to the review by Ofsted, indicates that many schools and colleges are taking steps to address antisemitism and related tensions through curriculum, personal development, assemblies and wider preventative work.[52]

Where cross-curriculum teaching takes place, children and young people are learning that antisemitism can include stereotypes, conspiracy narratives, or hostility linked to Jewish identity, across various subjects. Where it does not, pupils' learning about antisemitism may largely be confined to Holocaust education and religious education (RE).

However, the evidence presented earlier in this review indicates that young people's attitudes towards Jews is comparable worse than older aged groups and has declined in recent years.

Evidence submitted to the review suggests that, where Jewish people are encountered primarily in the context of the Holocaust, antisemitism or historical persecution, pupils may develop a narrow and incomplete understanding of Jewish identity. This risks presenting Jewish people principally as victims of prejudice rather than as members of a living, diverse and contemporary community with rich religious, cultural and social traditions.

A consistent theme across the evidence was the importance of broadening pupils' understanding of Jewish people, culture and identity across the curriculum, including through literature, history, citizenship, the arts and wider cultural learning. Stakeholders emphasised that building this knowledge helps to challenge

[51] Independent review stakeholder meeting with Sir David Bell (6 June 2026)

[52] Ofsted submission to the independent review (3 July 2026)

stereotypes, foster respect and create a stronger foundation for recognising and responding to antisemitism.

The review therefore recommends that schools and colleges take a more rounded approach, ensuring that the curriculum, tutorial programmes, pastoral provision and enrichment opportunities develop both understanding of antisemitism and meaningful knowledge of Jewish life, identity, religion and contemporary experiences. This dual focus is essential to promoting inclusion, preventing prejudice and enabling pupils to understand Jewish identity fully.

Holocaust Education

Holocaust education is a well-established and important component of the curriculum in England. Since its inclusion in the National Curriculum in 1991, it has been a compulsory element of history at Key Stage 3 and remains the only explicitly named historical event within the statutory curriculum.

Supported by sustained government investment, well-established specialist organisations and resources, all school-attending children should encounter the Holocaust during their secondary education. Whilst not previously a statutory requirement, most academies have taught the Holocaust in practice. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, once in force, will require academies to follow the National Curriculum. It is vital that the Holocaust remains a compulsory element of the curriculum.

Holocaust education operates within the discipline of history, and its primary purpose is to support understanding of the past. It provides a critical foundation for pupils' historical understanding, including the development of antisemitic ideology and the consequences of anti-Jewish racism within its historical context. It is not designed to address contemporary antisemitism directly, and its impact in this regard is indirect and dependent on the depth and quality of pupils' historical understanding, as well as wider curriculum and whole-school approaches.

Evidence from this review, drawing on national research and stakeholder input, indicates that Holocaust education does not consistently translate into well-developed historical understanding. Research from UCL Centre for Holocaust Education shows that, while awareness of key terms has improved, significant misconceptions persist, particularly in relation to responsibility and causation.[53]

Gaps remain in foundational knowledge, including understanding that the Holocaust was the genocide of the Jewish people, as well as chronology and geography. The

[53] UCL Centre for Holocaust Education (2025), *Research Digest 1: Understanding attitudes, behaviours and actions during the Holocaust* pp. 9–13, 17–19.

review heard evidence that some pupils can leave Holocaust education with serious misconceptions, including that antisemitism ended in 1945 or that Jews no longer exist following the Holocaust.[54]

Further evidence submitted to the review reinforces this picture. Respondents to the call for evidence recognised the importance of Holocaust education but described provision as variable and highly dependent on teacher knowledge, curriculum time, sequencing and the extent to which pupils are supported to understand antisemitism as a central historical factor. Several respondents emphasised that Holocaust education should not be relied upon to improve understanding of antisemitism in isolation.

Schools should consider how historical learning from Holocaust education is reinforced elsewhere in the curriculum and through wider whole-school approaches, including in relation to contemporary antisemitism.

This reflects a wider gap between curriculum coverage and pupil understanding. Where antisemitism is not taught as a central driver of the Holocaust, pupils may gain only a superficial understanding of how it developed. Where it is poorly contextualised, focused primarily on shocking events, or insufficiently linked to explicit teaching about antisemitism, it can leave pupils with fragmented knowledge rather than secure historical understanding. As a result, pupils may be less able to recognise when Holocaust-related language, imagery or references are distorted, trivialised or used in antisemitic ways. Responses to the call for evidence highlighted examples of such misuse in antisemitic bullying and Holocaust distortion, often reflecting weak understanding of the Holocaust and its historical context.

The need for historical rigour is consistent with IHRA guidance which emphasises fact-based teaching, explicit attention to antisemitism, and the importance of countering Holocaust denial and distortion.[55] It underlines the importance of teaching about the Holocaust in ways that are historically secure, give clear attention to antisemitism as a central explanatory factor, and connect appropriately with wider curriculum and whole-school approaches.

Alongside curriculum teaching, Holocaust remembrance activity continues to play an important role in many schools and colleges, including through Holocaust Memorial Day, assemblies and wider enrichment activity.

A recent DfE survey found that 81% of secondary schools reported marking Holocaust Memorial Day, most commonly through assemblies and curriculum-linked

[54] Meeting of the Reference Group (11 June 2026)

[55] IHRA Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust

lessons.[56] This indicates that commemoration is well established, but not yet universal, supporting the case for wider and more consistent recognition. These activities provide valuable opportunities for reflection, commemoration and engagement beyond the taught curriculum.

Strengthening Holocaust education depends on improving the clarity of its purpose, the coherence of curriculum design, and the quality and consistency of teaching. It should include explicit and accurate teaching of antisemitism as a central historical factor, alongside sustained support for teacher subject knowledge and professional confidence.

Recommendation 11

The Department for Education should strengthen the national approach to Holocaust education, underpinned by evidence and clear expectations, to ensure all pupils develop a secure understanding of the Holocaust, including the role of antisemitism within it. To enable this:

a. The Department for Education should commission an evidence-informed review of the effectiveness of Holocaust education to understand better how pupils encounter and make sense of the Holocaust, identify effective practice and areas for improvement, and inform future guidance and support for schools.

b. The Department for Education should ensure that the purpose of, and expectations for, Holocaust education are clearly articulated and consistently supported through non-statutory guidance, including understanding antisemitism as a central explanatory factor in explaining the Holocaust'

c. All schools and colleges should mark Holocaust Memorial Day, supported by secure historical understanding and linked to wider educational provision.

Citizenship

To improve understanding of contemporary antisemitism, citizenship education provides an opportunity for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of how prejudice and discrimination affect individuals, communities and civic life.

The response of the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) to the Curriculum and Assessment Review 2025 supports the case for citizenship as a relevant curriculum context for pupils' understanding of contemporary antisemitism.[57]

---

[56] School and college voice: March 2026 (June 2026)

[57] DfE Curriculum and Assessment Review Association of Citizenship Teaching response (2024)

Through citizenship, pupils may have the opportunity to explore conspiracy theories, Holocaust denial and distortion, and debates about civic equality and belonging.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review proposed a stronger role for citizenship, including statutory provision at primary level and a more specific programme of study. While the detail remains subject to further development, these proposals indicate a clear direction of travel towards strengthened citizenship education.[58]

Citizenship education should be considered one important route through which pupils can develop a more explicit understanding of contemporary antisemitism, both as part of wider racial and religious prejudice and as a distinct phenomenon with specific historical, ideological and contemporary forms.

Media literacy and online safety

Children and young people are growing up in a digital world where exposure to harmful content, including antisemitism, conspiracy theories, and other forms of prejudice and hatred are widespread. The Centre for Countering Digital Hate's submission to the review argued "*online content shapes attitudes before they enter the classroom and contributes to antisemitic behaviour in educational settings*".[59]

This concern is reinforced by evidence that social media platforms recommend and amplify content to young users. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue's Amplifying Antisemitism research has shown how quickly young people can be exposed to antisemitic content on TikTok due to algorithms. For instance, a 15-year-old boy interested in male lifestyle influencers was served antisemitic conspiracy theories within an hour.[60] The research found that algorithms can escalate from harmless content to antisemitic conspiracy theories, Holocaust distortion and denial, and far-right tropes within hours of use.[61]

These conclusions help explain why concerns about antisemitic online harm featured prominently in the evidence received by the review. In the survey of UCAS applicants, 43% of respondents claimed they had experienced or witnessed antisemitism online or on social media.[62] The prevalence of these experiences was reflected in the call for evidence which identified social media, jokes, memes, and misinformation as recurring concerns, with one third of respondents disagreeing that

---

[58] Curriculum and Assessment Review (2025)

[59] Centre of Countering Digital Hate's submission to the independent review (1 July 2026)

[60] Amplifying Antisemitism: How Recommender Algorithms Serve Harmful Content to Children - Institute for Strategic Dialogue

[61] Amplifying Antisemitism: How Recommender Algorithms Serve Harmful Content to Children - Institute for Strategic Dialogue

[62] UCAS Survey (2026)

antisemitism is sufficiently reflected in policies and teaching on online safety and related topics.

The NEU's submission to the review, suggested that media literacy is central to prevention because many antisemitic ideas encountered by young people tend to stem from information or content viewed online.[63] For instance, a young person told the review that many young people they know have strong opinions on Israel and Palestine, but those views are primarily shaped by social media.[64] The same submission explained that misinformation and conspiracy theories spread quickly amongst peers. This view was reinforced through several of the review's engagements, including with children and young people directly.

Effective media literacy requires learners not only to assess whether information is accurate, but also to understand who created it, why it was produced, and how it is disseminated and amplified online.[65] The importance of these skills was recognised in the Curriculum and Assessment Review which concluded that *"building media literacy is crucial to equip children and young people with the necessary tools to critically appraise and engage with media in all its forms"*.[66]

The Curriculum and Assessment Review recommended strengthening media literacy within citizenship and English, introducing age-appropriate media literacy from primary school onwards and ensuring that learners develop a strong understanding of misinformation, disinformation and critical engagement with information.[67]

However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on teachers having the confidence, knowledge and resources to address the content that children and young people may encounter online. The Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools (2024) found that:

> *"school staff continue to feel ill-equipped, under resourced and nervous in tackling online conspiracy belief, misinformation and disinformation…and this is particularly so amongst primary staff"*.[68]

This has particular relevance for antisemitism. Strengthening media literacy can help support learners to identify antisemitic conspiracy theories, Holocaust distortion and denial, collective blame directed at Jewish people, and misleading or manipulated

---

[63] NEU submission to the independent review (1 July 2026)

[64] Submission to the independent review (6 May 2026)

[65] Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (March 2026), *A Safe, Informed Digital Nation: Government's Media Literacy Action Plan (2026–2029)*.

[66] Curriculum and Assessment Review (2025)

[67] Curriculum and Assessment Review (2025)

[68] Public First *Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools: Report 2* (2026).

online content. This should sit within, and build on, the government's wider media literacy action plan.[69]

Alongside effective media literacy, keeping children safe online requires a whole-of-government effort and a critical part of this is ensuring that schools and colleges have robust guidance to keep children safe whilst in education. KCSIE has been significantly strengthened with regard to online safety in recent years. Online safety is embedded throughout the guidance, making clear the importance of ensuring a whole-setting approach to keeping children safe both online and offline.

The review welcomes measures to implement the Online Safety Act 2023 and the government's commitment to legislate to restrict access to social media platforms for under-16s, reflecting a growing recognition of the risks associated with early and unsupervised engagement with digital environments. While these measures may contribute to efforts to reduce antisemitic harm online, strong online safety and media literacy must remain priorities, supported by effective signposting to quality-assured resources, including those available through Educate Against Hate.

Tutorial time in colleges

Whilst some schools and colleges take a comprehensive approach to learning about antisemitism, there are inconsistencies. This reflects structural differences between sectors. Schools will operate within the National Curriculum following provision made in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, colleges do not; what students encounter depends on their course of study, with learning often delivered through tutorial or pastoral programmes rather than subject teaching.

In FE, tutorial and pastoral programmes are commonly used to deliver elements of students' wider study programme beyond their main qualification, reflecting the expectation that 16 to 19 study programmes include non-qualification activity such as employment, enrichment and pastoral provision.

Tutorials can provide a structured opportunity for students to explore wider personal, social and civic issues. In the context of antisemitism, they can help develop students' understanding of antisemitism as a form of prejudice, including its impact on Jewish students and communities, and contribute to a culture of informed, respectful discussion. They may also be used to develop students' media literacy skills and awareness of online safety.

Within a wider whole-college approach, tutorials can help reinforce inclusive values, build learners' confidence in engaging with difference, and connect questions of

[69] Public First *Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools: Report 2* (2026).

identity, belonging and discrimination to wider civic and social responsibilities. Although provision is structured differently across phases, pastoral and wider learning opportunities can perform a similar function in schools.

Discussing controversial issues

"*Brave spaces where discomfort and vulnerability are allowed are seen as more effective than avoidance or silence."*[70] Association of Colleges

Improving understanding of antisemitism through the curriculum, tutorial time and pastoral provision can result in controversial and sensitive issues being discussed. Such discussions are an important means of developing critical thinking, promoting respect, and preparing learners for life in modern Britain.

However, the review heard from the call for evidence that teachers often feel uneasy about teaching controversial issues due to low confidence in managing discussions, insufficient subject knowledge, concerns about handling prejudice, and uncertainty about whether to disclose their own personal or political views. This can lead to avoidance of such topics.[71] Evidence submitted presented examples where school leaders were reluctant to acknowledge or address antisemitism where they did not perceive it to be a significant issue within their own school.

Contemporary antisemitism often appears intertwined with political narratives about the State of Israel, antizionism, or the Middle East conflict. This overlap creates uncertainty for teachers who fear that addressing antisemitic tropes may be interpreted as taking a political stance and even having these discussions could lead to accusations of antisemitism. A participant in Liddle's (2024) research said:

> *"This particular conflict [in Israel/Palestine] – perhaps more than others – can lead to comments made about the actions of a particular faith or ethnicity rather than governments or organisations. This means discussions are particularly difficult to hold if young people are angry".*[72]

Furthermore, the Association of Citizenship Teachers (ACT), drawing on its National Citizenship Education Study, highlights that many teachers feel insufficiently

[70] Association of Colleges submission to the independent review (12 June 2026)

[71] Liddle, A., The riskiness of Gaza in the classroom: the experiences of UK teachers during an unfolding human rights crisis, *Human Rights Education Review* (2026).

[72] Liddle, A., The riskiness of Gaza in the classroom: the experiences of UK teachers during an unfolding human rights crisis, *Human Rights Education Review* (2026).

prepared to teach controversial political issues, pointing to gaps in training and support.[73]

The review heard that the requirements around political impartiality[74] can impact staff confidence, with stakeholders reporting that the DfE's *Political impartiality guidance* for schools (which is covered further in the next section) is sometimes interpreted as a barrier, discouraging schools from addressing antisemitism or related issues. The Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools' research (2026) found that:

> *"there was significant confusion over how political impartiality guidance should be interpreted"* and that *"some teachers raised concerns about how political impartiality made it difficult for them to address some of the more political types of misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy belief with young people."* [75]

Stakeholders repeatedly called for greater support to help learners explore sensitive issues without staff fearing complaints, accusations of bias, or causing offence. Staff should be encouraged and equipped to facilitate difficult conversations and be confident that senior leaders will support them in doing so.

The review heard of effective practice including schools and colleges developing internal guidance, teaching materials and, in some cases, scripted responses to significant global events to help staff respond consistently and confidently.[76] While the DfE has a role in supporting this work, institutions should also take steps to build staff confidence and capability. The DfE's Building Resilience to Extremism resources may be particularly helpful. Schools and colleges should consider using them to strengthen staff confidence in addressing sensitive and controversial issues safely, lawfully and without promoting a partisan political view.

Stakeholders also highlighted Solutions Not Sides as an effective resource for promoting dialogue and supporting understanding of complex geopolitical issues. Students and staff who had participated in its programmes generally reported

---

[73] Association for Citizenship Teaching (2025) *New research highlights the impact and challenges of citizenship education in schools*. Available at: https://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk/new-research-highlights-the-impact-and-challenges-of-citizenship-education-in-schools/ (Accessed: 27 May 2026).

[74] Under the Education Act 1996, local authorities, governing bodies and head teachers of maintained schools have a legal duty to prohibit the promotion of partisan political views in teaching and should take steps to ensure the balanced presentation of opposing views on political issues when they are brought to the attention of pupils. The same duties are placed on proprietors of independent schools, including academies, by the Independent School Standards.

[75] Public First *Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools: Report 2* (2026).

[76] Independent review visit with Sir David Bell to a school (27 April 2026)

positive experiences, particularly in improving knowledge and confidence in discussing issues where prior understanding was limited.

In summary, evidence submitted to the review highlights the importance of strong leadership in giving staff the confidence to discuss political and controversial issues, challenge misinformation and conspiracy theories, and address antisemitism effectively. This is particularly important where teachers need to challenge antisemitic narratives while facilitating balanced discussion of complex events, when political issues are brought to pupils' attention.

Recommendation 12

The Department for Education, schools and colleges should address antisemitism through appropriate places in the curriculum, tutorial time and pastoral provision. To enable this:

a. The Department for Education should ensure that citizenship education has sufficient opportunity to address contemporary antisemitism, alongside other forms of hatred and prejudice, within a coherent programme of learning.

b. The Department for Education should ensure schools and colleges embed high-quality teaching on media literacy and online safety, helping learners to recognise and confront harmful online content, including antisemitism and conspiracy theories.

c. Schools and colleges should make effective use of tutorial time, pastoral provision and wider learning opportunities to address contemporary antisemitism alongside other forms of hatred and prejudice.

The Department for Education should develop, quality assure and publish practical resources and tools to support schools, colleges, academy trusts, college groups, and/or local authorities in addressing antisemitism and wider hatred and social cohesion issues. These resources should include guidance and materials to help all staff discuss controversial issues and respond to significant global events, particularly those relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict and contemporary antisemitism.

Religious education

Religious education (RE) can play a key role in building pupils' understanding of Judaism, Jewish life and Jewish culture. Where it is taught well, RE can support a more accurate, representative and context-rich understanding of Jewish identity as diverse, contemporary and evolving.

Several responses to this review's call for evidence emphasised that Judaism should not be presented only as a belief system or set of theological claims, but that pupils should understand Judaism as a living religious tradition connected to culture, history, community and practice. This may include understanding antisemitism in the context of Jewish life and lived experience. This helps ensure that Holocaust education, though important, is not pupils' only meaningful encounter with Jewish culture and identity.

This stance aligns with a broader understanding of high-quality RE as a subject that should provide pupils with a secure body of knowledge about religion and belief, including how traditions are embodied by people and communities, and shaped by history, identity and contemporary life.

Evidence from this review suggests that RE teaching can be inconsistent. The review heard concerns that in weaker RE provision Judaism is not taught with sufficient time, depth or accuracy, with a tendency to focus on festivals, artefacts or simplified representations without sufficient attention to coherence, diversity or context.

Respondents to the call for evidence linked this to limited curriculum time, uneven teacher subject knowledge and insufficient access to specialist support, including expert Jewish speakers, high-quality resources and curriculum materials informed by relevant expertise in Judaism. This can limit pupils' understanding of Jewish life and increase the risk that they rely on ignorance, stereotyping or distortion.

These concerns reflect wider structural weaknesses within RE. The Curriculum and Assessment Review 2025 identifies RE as an area of longstanding fragmentation, with uneven national arrangements and variable status across schools. Its proposals point towards a nationally coherent approach, intended to improve entitlement, consistency and quality.

RE's first purpose is to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Its relevance to tackling contemporary antisemitism is therefore indirect.

Where Judaism is taught well, revisited over time and informed by appropriate expertise, it can help pupils develop a more accurate understanding of Jewish identity and experience. Conversely, limited or poorly informed teaching may leave pupils with narrow or inaccurate views of Judaism and Jewish life.

Recommendation 13

The Department for Education should ensure that Judaism is represented with appropriate depth and coherence within the proposed curriculum framework for religious education. The aims for the subject should reflect Judaism as a diverse and contemporary tradition, so that where antisemitism is addressed, it is grounded in a secure knowledge of Jewish life, belief, culture and community.

Social cohesion and cultural engagement

"Breaking down otherness cannot be achieved through policy statements alone; it requires meaningful contact, openness and opportunities for young people to encounter one another as people rather than stereotypes." Call for evidence response

Through social cohesion and enrichment, there should be other opportunities for children and young people to learn about Jewish life, identity and traditions.

Schools in England have a duty to promote community cohesion, under the Education Act 2002. Although the explicit duty for Ofsted to report on schools' contribution to community cohesion has been removed, the underlying principles remain embedded within the inspection framework.

In addition, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires state-funded schools to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

The government's approach to social cohesion emphasises creating opportunities for people to come together across different backgrounds, recognising that meaningful interaction is central to building trust and reducing prejudice within education. This is set out in the government's Protecting What Matters social cohesion action plan.

The review recognises the government's commitment to expand community-led school linking projects as part of this, enabling children from different backgrounds to meet, learn and play together during their formative years. These programmes are intended to build lasting relationships, promote mutual understanding, and reduce the risk of division developing.

There is some evidence that early and sustained contact between young people from different backgrounds reduces prejudice over time.[77] The British Muslim Trust and British Future's Understanding Anti-Muslim Hostility research demonstrates that frequent and meaningful interaction between groups is associated with more positive attitudes. Individuals who report higher levels of contact were significantly less likely to hold stereotypical or prejudicial views.[78]

Attitudes are notably more positive among younger people who are more likely to have grown up in diverse settings, while more negative views are concentrated among those with little or no direct contact.[79] Growing up together through school and college and shared environments builds empathy, strengthens trust and reduces susceptibility to misinformation and prejudice.

However, evidence from stakeholders presented examples of Jewish families choosing faith-based schools over mainstream settings due to concerns about safety and belonging. One in five Jewish parents with children in mainstream schools say they are more likely to send their children to a Jewish school following the 7 October 2023 attack and the war in the Middle East.[80]

The concern for this review is not that Jewish families choosing Jewish schools causes or adds to antisemitism. Rather, some stakeholders expressed concern that increasing separation could reduce opportunities for contact and understanding between Jewish and non-Jewish learners and emphasised the importance of sustaining opportunities for positive interaction and cultural engagement.

Enrichment

One way of supporting such interaction and understanding is through enrichment activity. Enrichment refers to activities and experiences that broadens learners' knowledge, skills, interests and personal development beyond the taught curriculum or qualification programme. Where it enables them to engage meaningfully with different communities, traditions and lived experiences, enrichment can play an important role in supporting efforts to prevent antisemitism and wider racism and prejudice.

---

[77] The Linking Network Impact Report 2023-24 found that structured interactions between pupils from different backgrounds reduced anxiety about interacting across lines of difference, increased respect for those from different backgrounds, and improved confidence in forming relationships; McKenna et al (2022) *Testing the contact hypothesis;* What works to reduce prejudice and discrimination? - A review of the evidence (2015)

[78] Understanding Anti-Muslim Hostility: Foundations for Action - British Future

[79] Understanding Anti-Muslim Hostility: Foundations for Action - British Future

[80] Antisemitism in schools: how prevalent is it, and how might it affect parents' decisions about where to educate their children | JPR

As with social mixing opportunities and strong cohesion, it can help learners move beyond stereotypes or abstract ideas about difference, supporting greater familiarity, empathy and mutual understanding. This is important where students may have limited direct contact with Jewish communities or other faith and minority communities.

DfE's *Enrichment framework for schools and colleges* provides a useful opportunity to translate wider cohesion and cultural engagement aims into practical activity. The framework supports schools and colleges to plan, strengthen and review enrichment experiences for all learners, with an emphasis on community links and participation. Such activity may be delivered in a range of ways, including through timetabled provision, pastoral or tutorial programmes, activities outside formal lesson time, educational visits, student-led initiatives and work with external partners.

Evidence gathered through this review suggests that enrichment can play an important role across both schools and colleges. Respondents to the call for evidence frequently highlighted the value of direct engagement with Jewish people, communities and institutions, including through educational visits, community partnerships, interfaith activities, external speakers, cultural programmes and structured dialogue. The recent launch of Jewish Culture Month may provide a valuable opportunity to enhance understanding of Jewish life, heritage and culture in the UK, both historically and in the present day.[81]

Such experiences were seen as particularly valuable where learners may otherwise have limited exposure to Jewish life and identity. In colleges, stakeholders also highlighted tutorial, personal development and wider student experience programmes as important for exploring identity, belonging, discrimination and community relations, particularly where these issues may not be addressed through qualification-led study alone.

In this context, enrichment should be seen as a complementary mechanism for supporting community understanding and inclusive school and college cultures. It can help create opportunities for learners to build relationships across difference, strengthening cohesion and contributing to longer-term resilience against antisemitism and other forms of prejudice.

The call for evidence and submissions to the review indicate that dozens of mainstream schools have cancelled enrichment opportunities to learn about the Jewish faith, life and culture because of concerns about safety and security. In its submission to the review, Manchester Jewish Museum reported a 50% reduction in school visits following the Heaton Park synagogue terrorist attack.[82] Although this

[81] A celebration of British Jewish culture, community and creativity | Jewish Culture Month

[82] Submission to the independent review (1 July 2026)

evidence relates specifically to schools, it illustrates a wider issue relevant to both schools and colleges.

Enrichment involving Jewish institutions requires proportionate risk assessment, clear guidance and close engagement with providers so that safety concerns do not unnecessarily reduce young people's opportunities to encounter Jewish life and culture.

Recommendation 14

The Department for Education, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should promote and enable opportunities for schools and colleges to engage with Jewish communities and contemporary Jewish life through social mixing, enrichment and cultural engagement.

4. Staff conduct and support

"A teacher referred to a Jewish student as, 'that Jew' when describing him to another teacher. This was heard by the whole class."[83] – Call for evidence respondent

This chapter examines the role of the school and college workforce, professional standards and institutional policies in preventing and responding to antisemitism. It considers the challenges schools and colleges face in balancing freedom of expression, political impartiality, safeguarding and inclusion while ensuring that Jewish staff and learners feel safe, respected and able to participate fully in education.

Teaching workforce

Policies and processes regarding Teachers' Standards, misconduct and regulatory action provide a framework to address cases of antisemitic behaviour.

The Teachers' Standards were published in 2011 to drive the minimum level of practice required for teachers to gain Qualified Teacher Status and to pass their Early Career Teacher induction. They set out the personal and professional expectations and minimum requirements for all teaching staff, act as a benchmark for ongoing appraisals, and to judge whether a teacher's conduct is acceptable for continued registration and practice in England.

However, the use of the standards in misconduct decisions has not always resulted in satisfactory action against allegations of antisemitic behaviour. The DfE conducted an internal review in February 2026 following a decision by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) not to prohibit a teacher who posted support for Hamas on social media – a proscribed organisation behind the 7 October 2023 terrorist attack. This review agrees with the recommendations of the internal review, in particular, calls for the TRA to develop and deliver specific training and guidance for staff and panellists on identifying racism and extremism, explicitly including antisemitism.

The DfE is currently actioning these recommendations, alongside considering updates to the guidance on how professional conduct hearing panels review teacher misconduct.[84] This review has found that the Teachers' Standards could also be further strengthened to explicitly encourage teachers to create an inclusive environment, to challenge prejudice-based behaviour, including antisemitism, and to be mindful of their professional conduct online.

---

[83] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[84] DfE (2022) Teacher misconduct: the prohibition of teachers

While is it reasonable to interpret antisemitic behaviour as a breach of professional conduct, the absence of clear, specific standards means that teachers and leaders may not consistently recognise where the threshold for misconduct lies, or when behaviour becomes serious enough to require escalation.[85]

Managing antisemitic behaviour of learners

Part One of the Teachers' Standards requires teachers to manage behaviour effectively to create a safe and positive learning environment. A teacher who tolerates or fails to challenge antisemitic behaviour would therefore be falling short of this expectation.

The Teachers' Standards also emphasise safeguarding responsibilities, requiring teachers to have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being. Antisemitism can be a safeguarding concern, and teachers are expected to protect leaners from antisemitic bullying, abuse, and harm. Failing to do so would be inconsistent with the Teachers' Standards and could undermine a school or college's safeguarding duties.

The review heard numerous examples in the call for evidence of teachers failing to challenge antisemitism. Teachers should have a clear understanding of how to identify and challenge all forms of prejudice and hatred, including antisemitism, respond to incidents consistently, and help create an environment in which all protected groups are understood and respected. For this reason, the review believes the Teachers' Standards could be strengthened by making explicit that staff are expected to address and manage prejudicial and racist behaviour, including antisemitic behaviour.

Managing antisemitic behaviour of staff

Part Two of the Teachers' Standards requires teachers to uphold public trust in the profession and to maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. This includes requiring teachers to demonstrate respect for others and to promote tolerance, as part of the requirement that teachers must not undermine fundamental British values (of which 'tolerance' is one).

Studies have indicated that the definition of fundamental British values is interpreted inconsistently, which can lead to uncertainty about the standards of conduct expected of teachers.[86] A clearer standard could better support teachers'

---

[85] DfE (2026) Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) statutory guidance and DfE (2025) Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools provides further clarification to employers of teachers about the duty to consider referring serious cases of misconduct to the TRA.

[86] Reed, M. and Rees, R. (2024) 'The UK Prevent Strategy's "fundamental British values": a qualitative systematic review of perspectives from the education sector', *London Review of Education*,

understanding of expected conduct when it comes to demonstrating tolerance and respect to the rights of others and tackling all forms of prejudice. This may also support panels in their understanding of this standard when assessing whether Teachers' Standards have been breached.

Whilst the standards already require teachers to show tolerance and respect for the rights of others, naming antisemitism directly alongside other forms of racism and discrimination would remove ambiguity and make expectations clearer. This would then give school leaders a clear basis for capability or disciplinary procedures and in cases of serious misconduct, a referral to the TRA. Antisemitic behaviour should be incompatible with the professional conduct expected under Part Two of the standards.

Managing personal political expression outside school

Teachers are, of course, entitled to hold personal political beliefs and to take part in political activity, including protest, in their own time and outside of the school environment. However, the Teachers' Standards require staff to maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times, and this extends to behaviour beyond the classroom, which should include online behaviour.

This means that teachers must avoid any conduct that could undermine public trust in the profession, such as undermining fundamental British values. For instance, it is legitimate for a teacher to attend a protest, but displaying an antisemitic sign at the protest could breach Teachers' Standards.

Political expression on social media should be handled with particular care. Staff are advised to keep political activity separate from their professional identity, ensuring that anything posted publicly cannot be interpreted as influencing pupils or linked to the school. Evidence submitted to this review suggests that teachers may not be fully aware of this or that pupils, parents, and the wider community may see publicly accessible content.

The review therefore recommends that the Teachers' Standards clearly set out the behaviour expected of teachers both within and outside school, including online, so that professional expectations are unambiguous and public confidence in the profession is maintained.

---

22 (1), p.33.; Sant, E. (2021) 'Promoting Fundamental British Values as a Pedagogy of Differences'. In: *Political Education in Times of Populism*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schools' existing policies on staff conduct and social media use play an important role in managing these risks and should be applied sensitively and proportionately where political activity is involved.

Wider workforce

While much of the focus is on teachers, support staff and the wider workforce in schools and colleges can also influence learners' experiences and institutions' culture. Support staff, in particular, have regular contact with learners and play important roles in behaviour, welfare and pastoral support.

The review heard evidence that some support staff had contributed to a perceived hostile environment for Jewish learners, through the expression of personal views, failure to challenge antisemitic behaviour, or involvement in inappropriate discussions relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict. These incidents demonstrate that creating an inclusive and respectful environment is the responsibility of all adults working in schools and colleges, not just teaching staff.

However, the absence of clear, consistently applied national framework of professional standards or conduct expectations creates a gap in schools' and colleges' ability to address conduct that may undermine learner wellbeing or contribute to prejudice-based hostility. The review therefore considers that it is important that all staff understand their role in preventing discrimination and maintaining a safe environment for every learner and professional.

To ensure consistency of expectations regarding the whole workforce, this review recommends that employers encourage their schools and colleges to reflect on their staff code of conduct, which should also apply to support staff.

Recommendation 15

The Department for Education should ensure that professionals working in schools or colleges are clear that antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred are forms of discrimination that are incompatible with professional conduct. To support this:

a. The Department for Education should amend Part One of the Teachers' Standards to enhance expectations on teachers to manage pupil behaviour includes a requirement to challenge prejudice and hate-based behaviour, including antisemitism.

b. The Department for Education should amend Part Two of the Teachers' Standards to ensure antisemitic, racist and other discriminatory behaviour is incompatible with professional conduct, within and outside the school, including online.

c. Schools and colleges should ensure their staff code of conduct specifies that antisemitic, and other forms of religious and racial harassment, abuse and discrimination, are incompatible with professional conduct.

Political impartiality

Under the Education Act 1996, local authorities, governing bodies and head teachers of maintained schools have a legal duty to prohibit the promotion of partisan political views in teaching and should take steps to ensure the balanced presentation of opposing views on political issues when they are brought to the attention of pupils. The same duties are placed on proprietors of independent schools, including academies, by the Independent School Standards.

While these statutory duties do not apply in the same way to FE providers, those that educate 14-16-year-olds are required to comply with the provisions in the Education Act as a condition of funding arrangements.

These requirements are relevant where antisemitism may arise in politically charged contexts, requiring schools to ensure discussion remains balanced and does not cross into discriminatory or abusive expression.

The review recognises a broader pattern identified across schools and colleges, where institutions are increasingly grappling with tensions between freedom of expression, political expression, and the need to safeguard children and young people.

Political expression and pupil wellbeing in schools

This review heard numerous examples of teachers and pupils displaying or expressing support for Palestine by wearing badges, flags, or other political symbols and slogans such as ‘Free Palestine’, including staff displaying Palestinian flags in their classrooms without relevance to the lesson.

Although this review has been clear that showing support for, or criticism of, the actions of the State of Israel, similar to that directed at any other country, is a legitimate form of political expression and is not antisemitic, respondents to the call for evidence expressed mixed views on whether such expressions should have a place within schools.

Some argued that restrictions on political symbols, slogans, or messages (political identifiers) worn or displayed by members of staff or pupils, limits freedom of expression, while others considered such expression incompatible with political impartiality requirements. Respondents also raised concerns about inconsistency within schools, where some forms of political identifiers were prohibited (for example, displaying the Palestinian flag) while others were allowed (for example, displaying the Ukrainian flag).

Jewish pupils and staff have spoken to the discomfort they have felt, not because the symbols or slogans are inherently discriminatory, but because, in certain contexts, they can be perceived as connected to hostile narratives, one-sided political environments, or assumptions about Jewish identity (e.g. being Jewish means you support or have views on the State of Israel).

On the other hand, the fact that a political identifier may make someone uncomfortable does not necessarily mean that it breaches political impartiality requirements, constitutes discrimination, or justifies restriction. There is a difference between lawful political expression which might make people feel uncomfortable and unlawful harassment or discrimination.

The existence of that distinction does not negate the experiences reported by Jewish children, young people and staff, many of whom felt compelled to hide their identity or beliefs or were uncomfortable expressing their views.

One respondent reported to the review: *“at times, I feel as though we are living in a pre-Second World War environment, where Jewish people once again feel the need to conceal their identity”*. This is a profoundly concerning statement. No child, young person or member of staff should ever feel compelled to hide their faith, identity or heritage to feel safe. The fact that such a sentiment was expressed underlines the seriousness of the issues raised through this review.

The review also heard, via the call for evidence, from others who feel they have been censored or unfairly targeted where Palestinian political identifiers are banned or treated as inherently problematic while other national, cultural or political symbols are permitted. The issue is not necessarily the presence of Palestinian flags or slogans but the context and impact, for example, who is displaying it, where, and whether it is connected to teaching, targeted at individuals, or whether schools respond consistently to comparable symbols of forms of expression.

Schools are subject to statutory duties relating to political impartiality. Teachers must not promote a partisan political view in the teaching of any subject to students, even if this is not their intention. Schools must take reasonable steps to ensure that, when political issues are brought to the attention of pupils, they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views, enabling pupils to form their own opinions

It is the view of this review that political identifiers do not have a place in our schools, as echoed by Lord Mann in his review of antisemitism and other forms of racism in the NHS.[87] However, the evidence received by the review does not suggest that the appropriate response is to prohibit all forms of lawful political expression, nor that any particular political position should be treated as inherently unacceptable within schools.

Rather, the challenge is to create environments in which pupils from all backgrounds feel able to express their identity, participate in discussion, and respectfully disagree with one another. This means recognising that staff and pupils may hold strongly held and sometimes conflicting political views, while ensuring that no individual feels excluded, or unable to express a different perspective.

Evidence provided to the review demonstrated that the impact of political expression often depends less on the particular symbol, slogan or viewpoint being expressed and more on the context in which it is expressed. The review therefore considers that schools should carefully consider the time, place and manner of political expression.

For example, there may be appropriate opportunities for discussion of contemporary political issues within lessons, but classrooms, staff attire, and permanent displays can carry institutional authority and may reasonably be subject to different expectations.

Finally, political views should be expressed in ways that invite discussion rather than create barriers to engagement or make those with differing backgrounds or beliefs feel unwelcome.

---

[87] Lord Mann review of antisemitism and other forms of racism in the NHS and healthcare regulatory system (2026)

For staff in particular, consideration should be given to the unique position of trust and authority they hold. Staff are entitled to hold and express personal political views. However, when acting in their professional capacity, they should have regard to their responsibility to maintain political impartiality in their teaching and to create an environment in which all pupils feel safe, respected and able to form their own views.

This is not because political identifiers are inherently discriminatory, but because pupils may reasonably interpret their display by a teacher differently. Pupils, rightly, treat teachers as people who have authority over them and might feel unable or inhibited in discussing an issue where a teacher has overtly expressed their own opinions through an identifier such as a badge or a flag.

The review therefore does not advocate blanket prohibitions. Instead, schools should develop clear, consistent policies that focus on educational purpose, professional responsibilities, safeguarding, inclusion and political impartiality. Such policies should be applied consistently across different political issues and should seek to protect both freedom of lawful expression and the right of all pupils to be able to participate fully in school life.

Similarly, we would expect all schools to consider how their uniform policies may create a safe and welcoming environment for all pupils. But where badges, symbols and other personal items that may express a political view are worn, schools should provide pupils a balanced account of opposing views.

For most schools, this is already the case and is reinforced by current DfE School uniforms guidance – *"schools should consider whether to make their position on political impartiality clear in their uniform policy. This includes any rules around badges or other items supporting causes or organisations being fixed to uniform items*".

Political expression, student wellbeing and ability to learn in colleges

This review has heard of similar examples of political expression causing distress to Jewish students and staff within colleges. As colleges operate within a different legal and regulatory landscape, this review has considered ways in which Jewish staff and students can both work and learn in an environment free from hostility, but where everyone can freely express lawful views.

FE colleges have a duty to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for students, staff and visiting speakers.[88] This sits alongside the prohibitions on discrimination and harassment related to protected characteristics and responsibilities to have regard to the need to foster good relations, eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in the Equality Act 2010.

College leaders must ensure the Act is upheld and that institutions remain places for all to learn and where everyone can express their identity and lawful views without fear. As colleges must adhere to statutory guidance on KCSIE, they also have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the age of 18.

Some stakeholders and respondents to the call for evidence argued that where staff display or wear political identifiers that may be construed as promoting a political view, this may interfere with a colleges' essential functions, for example, teaching and learning.

Political expression by staff can create a learning environment in which some learners feel distressed, excluded, or unable to engage fully with their education. In such circumstances, colleges may be justified in placing proportionate restrictions on lawful political expression where this is necessary to ensure learners' education and fulfil the college's wider duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Where students are under 18, colleges should also have regard to their statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

To be more specific, this will be context dependent. Colleges may want to consider whether learners feel they can learn or ask questions; how old the learners are; whether there are other opportunities for staff or students to express their views; how prominent the symbol is, what it says, whether the views are discussed or raised verbally; whether its accompanied by an otherwise inclusive environment; or there are other indicators of some students not being included.

Part of this will be about reminding students and staff about the college's freedom of speech code of practice and their diversity, equality and inclusion policy – making clear what principles will be considered when deciding what is or is not permitted by law. A college might not have detailed principles but pre-empting or considering how political activity that may impact students' ability to engage in their education will likely be a helpful starting point to decide how to think about these issues, whilst recognising decisions will be based on a case-by-case judgement.

---

[88] Education (No. 2) Act 1986. Colleges registered with the Office for Students are also subject to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 and the OfS's regulation.

Recommendation 16

Schools and college leaders should consider the appropriateness of political expression and identifiers in their respective settings, considering the time, place and manner alongside their respective legal duties. To enable this:

a. School leaders should carefully consider the time, place, and manner of political expression (including in relation to staff dress codes and pupil uniform policies), ensuring that the wearing or displaying of political symbols, flags, or slogans, and the expression of political views, are compliant with their legal duties in relation to political impartiality, whilst being mindful of promoting respectful dialogue, inclusion and engagement.

b. College leaders should consider setting out how they will approach the wearing or displaying of political identifiers by staff, balancing their duties relating to safeguarding, equality and freedom of speech, with the need to ensure that all students can engage effectively in their education and that the welfare of students under 18 is protected.

Distinguishing between political expression and discrimination

The DfE's Political impartiality guidance states that schools must not promote partisan views, but still uphold shared principles such as anti-racism, equality, and respect for fundamental British values. A consistent theme within the call for evidence was that staff often lack confidence in applying the guidance in practice, particularly when discussions relate to Israel, Palestine and antisemitism.

Although the political impartiality guidance states that challenging racism is not a political issue and does not require balanced presentation, in practice, antisemitism is frequently intertwined with political views about a nation state or political ideology. This means that challenging antisemitism often requires teachers to address or correct political claims or misinformation, which can appear to conflict with impartiality duties.

Some respondents to the call for evidence argued that schools are uncertain whether to prioritise neutrality or take a more active stance when racist behaviour arises within political discussions. These respondents stressed that schools should be clear that antisemitism is racism rather than a legitimate political viewpoint and that political impartiality should never prevent schools from addressing discrimination.

Furthermore, they revealed schools adopting a risk-averse approach, discouraging conversations about current events for fear of being perceived as politically partial.

The review found evidence of both top-down and self-silencing via engagements, as well as academic research.[89]

For example, Liddle's (2026) found examples of senior leaders restricting discussions on the Israel-Palestine conflict altogether. Teachers described *"a censorship of discussion"* or being limited to a single assembly with no opportunity for follow-up discussion.[90] Many reported fearing disciplinary action or other repercussions despite believing such discussions were educationally important.

The current political impartiality guidance outlines legal duties but does not give teachers the tools to handle misinformation, conspiracy theories or safeguarding risks linked to antisemitism and other forms of racism and extremism. One respondent highlight this in the call for evidence:

> *"not long after the war started, and we [parents] raised it to the school that my son was being singled out for being Jewish, the head told us that 'they were not allowed to take sides.' This isn't about taking sides, my son has nothing to do with the war in the Middle East, and he felt he wasn't being protected."*[91]

Respondents argued that the guidance is sometimes misunderstood as requiring silence on controversial issues rather than balanced discussion and critical inquiry.

Teachers should be encouraged and equipped to create an environment for difficult conversations to take place, and for learners to become active, informed and democratic citizens. To do this, settings must distinguish between political discussion, expression and promotion.

There was a widespread view within the call for evidence, backed up by research undertaken by the Commission into Countering Conspiracy Theories in Schools that the guidance currently supports schools in principle but does not provide clarity on how to apply it in complex real-world situations involving antisemitism, racism, freedom of expression and contested political issues, and therefore is "inhibiting teachers' ability to address conspiracy belief, misinformation and disinformation."[92]

Furthermore, some respondents called for stronger enforcement of the guidance, clearer accountability mechanisms and more active intervention from the DfE, Ofsted and local authorities.

---

[89] Liddle, A., The riskiness of Gaza in the classroom: the experiences of UK teachers during an unfolding human rights crisis, *Human Rights Education Review* (2026).

[90] Liddle, A., The riskiness of Gaza in the classroom: the experiences of UK teachers during an unfolding human rights crisis, *Human Rights Education Review* (2026).

[91] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[92] Public First *Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools: Report 2* (2026).

Recommendation 17

The Department for Education should strengthen guidance for schools on political impartiality to provide clear examples that illustrate how it should be applied in practice, particularly in relation to contemporary and sensitive geopolitical topics.

Bullying and harassment of staff

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to ensure their staff can work in an environment that is safe, respectful and free from bullying and harassment.

Managing staff bullying and harassment in schools and colleges is governed through a combination of employment law, equality legislation, and professional standards, rather than a single statutory framework. Responsibility sits largely with employers to interpret and apply legal duties through their own HR policies and procedures.

In the call for evidence, 45% for respondents who were professionals within schools and colleges experience antisemitism yearly. This is supported by survey data from NASUWT which indicates that around 51% of Jewish teachers have experienced antisemitism in the workplace, with a significant proportion reporting direct abuse.[93]

These experiences range from overt incidents, such as slurs or graffiti, to microaggressions or more indirect forms of exclusion, stereotyping, or hostility linked to assumptions about identity or political views. Jewish staff find themselves navigating situations where they are: assumed to hold certain views on the State of Israel or Zionism; drawn into political discussions in ways that others are not; or treated as representative of a wider geopolitical position. This can create a heightened sense of visibility and vulnerability.

The call for evidence and engagement with stakeholders has revealed some horrific examples of abuse that Jewish staff have experienced since the escalation of tensions in the Middle East. An example includes *“students shouting 'Free Palestine' at him [a Jewish teacher] in the playground and corridors, holding up Palestinian flags in his lessons or writing 'Free Palestine' on the board”.*[94]

Another respondent reported that students:

> *“accused me [a Jewish teacher] of killing Jesus, have dismissed the Hamas rapes and the attendant celebrations in London, have stated that Holocaust remembrance is “inappropriate” and “taking sides” and accused Israelis and*

[93] NASUWT (2025) Antisemitism and discrimination in schools

[94] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

> *"Zionists" of being "baby killers". Students have stated that "it's not racist to say Jews are rich because it's just true". I had antisemitic comments written on my whiteboard (in the classroom used by only the two Jewish teachers) such as "one Holocaust does not justify another".*[95]

Antisemitism directed towards staff can undermine wellbeing, professional confidence, and retention. As a result, some Jewish staff report feeling reluctant to disclose their identity or engage in discussions for fear of being misunderstood or targeted.

Responding to antisemitism directed at professionals

The NASUWT survey found around a third of respondents did not feel able to report incidents, and over half of those who did report believed that appropriate action was not taken.[96] As a result, there is evidence from staff and Jewish community organisations, such as the Board of Deputies and the Community Security Trust, that Jewish staff who experience antisemitism in schools and colleges have low confidence in reporting and redress.[97]

One respondent to the call for evidence described their employer's response to antisemitic abuse as *"largely reactive, insufficient and focused on resilience rather than addressing underlying prejudice".*[98] One theme in the call for evidence was the importance of drawing a distinction between individual incidents and their cumulative impact, particularly when combined with perceived leadership inaction.

Whilst many schools and colleges have taken any allegation of antisemitism and other forms of racism very seriously, this review has heard too many examples of incidents where Jewish professionals have not had the experience they deserve. One respondent to the call for evidence summarised their experience of raising an antisemitic incident with HR:

> *"the very first question I was asked was "do you want to take this forward informally, or formally". As if an antisemitic incident should be handled informally. It plays it down from the get go, makes you feel as the victim right away that you are choosing the difficult road rather than the "easy" one. It takes strength and confidence to take any grievance of this kind as far as possible within HR structures without being scared out of the process."*[99]

---

[95] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[96] NASUWT (2025) Antisemitism and discrimination in schools: survey findings

[97] Independent review stakeholder meetings with the Secretariat and Sir David Bell (25 March 2026)

[98] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[99] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

Such experiences risk undermining confidence in reporting mechanisms, discouraging victims from coming forward, and creating the perception that antisemitism is not treated with the same seriousness as other forms of prejudice and discrimination.

Preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff

The review welcomes the recent publication of the DfE's Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff guidance which makes clear that antisemitism is one of several forms of unacceptable prejudice and discrimination that schools must actively prevent and address. It places antisemitism alongside other forms of racism and discrimination related to the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, recognising that such behaviour may amount to unlawful harassment and, in some cases, a criminal offence.

It emphasises that all staff should be able to work in an environment free from hostility related to their identity and that schools should take a whole-school approach to preventing, recording and responding to such behaviour. This review recommends that all schools and colleges strengthen their response to bullying and harassment of staff.

Recommendation 18

Schools and college employers should have a robust reporting, escalation and response to antisemitic abuse, bullying, harassment or similar incidents against staff and, where relevant, governors and trustees. All incidents against staff, including those involving pupils, students, parents, colleagues or third parties, should be identified, recorded, investigated and addressed promptly and appropriately.

5. External Pressures

"Members and staff who are pro-Israel, or hold Zionist views… suppress the expression of those views because dissenting voices are often met with hostility."[100] - Monaghan Report

This chapter examines the influence of external actors on schools' and colleges' responses to antisemitism, including education unions, parents, and communities. It considers how these can affect decision-making.

Trade unions

There are a number of trade unions representing staff who work in schools and colleges. Some of those focus on those with professional qualifications in education – e.g. National Education Union (NEU), National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and University and College Union (UCU) – while others represent members working across a wide range of other activities – e.g. Unison and GMB. (For shorthand hereafter, all unions who represent staff who work in schools and colleges will be encompassed by the term 'education unions').

The education unions play a vital role in supporting staff through representation and advice. They aim to protect staff, improve working conditions, and influence the quality of education through campaigning and lobbying.

In addition, education unions have, over the years, been at the forefront of campaigns to tackle prejudice and hate both within education settings and beyond. This includes, as noted above, efforts to understand more about the specific issues facing their members, and the pupils and students they teach, as well as offering continued professional development courses in areas such as behaviour, wellbeing, culture and equalities.

Against such a backdrop, it is concerning that this review has heard, through both verbal and written testimony, claims made by Jewish organisations and teachers, as well as school and college leaders, that some education union activity has become increasingly 'politicised' on issues and matters that are perceived to extend beyond 'core' education and staff representation matters, such as the Israel–Palestine conflict.

It is entirely reasonable for an education union to express solidarity with victims of conflict and to support peace and human rights. The extent to which this activity takes place is, in the end, a matter for the members of the union and those they elect

[100] Monaghan Report (2025)

to represent them. However, qualitative stakeholder evidence gathered by the review recorded that some Jewish union members have reported that they feel that they cannot rely on their union for support. This is felt particularly acutely when unions overwhelmingly focus, in a well-documented way, on a pro-Palestine, anti-State of Israel position.[101]

Evidence submitted to the review included accounts of union representatives using discriminatory language towards Jewish members. These accounts suggest that some Jewish staff perceive their concerns are being dismissed or minimised, contributing to a sense that their unions are failing to represent them effectively. As the UCU has stated, there is an importance in "*being willing to hear when members tell us they feel unsafe, unheard, or marginalised, and responding with seriousness, care, and action*".[102] Clearly, such a principle applies equally to Jewish members raising concerns about antisemitism and exclusion.

A related concern is that the approach taken by some education unions and their branches may risk contributing to the politicisation of an international conflict within educational settings. Stakeholders, particularly those in local government, reported that some local union-supported campaigning and days of action have had knock-on effects in schools, including walkouts and protests, which some leaders found difficult to manage.

Stakeholders the review engaged with, reported that in some cases, such activity had exposed learners to inappropriate or divisive language.[103] One respondent to the call for evidence reported that they had attended a march where they witnessed union members marching with people calling to "globalise the intifada"[104] – a phrase which police have identified as potentially constituting a hate incident or public order offence in certain contexts.[105]

Unions are aware of these concerns and have taken steps to address them. In the summer of 2025, the NEU commissioned Karon Monaghan KC to conduct a review into discrimination, harassment, freedom of expression and governance within the union.[106] The Monaghan Report *"did not find evidence of a culture of, or systemic, misogyny, sexual harassment, racism, transphobia, bullying or antisemitism"*. It did

---

[101] For example, since 2023, the NEU has passed national motions on Palestine at every annual conference and at executive level.

[102] UCU (June 2026) reiterates support for Palestinian rights and peace, alongside unequivocal condemnation and calls to tackle antisemitism.

[103] Independent review stakeholder meetings with the Secretariat and Sir David Bell (22 May 2026, 5 June 2026)

[104] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[105] Joint Statement from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police | Metropolitan Police

[106] Monaghan Report (2025)

raise a concern about *"the adequacy of the policies and procedures for dealing with them"* and recommended that it is "*made clear that antisemitism is race discrimination and it may also amount to religious discrimination and/or harassment."*[107]

As part of the review's engagement with the NEU, the General Secretary was clear that any perception that the NEU is antisemitic or racist was not accurate. He was very clear that the NEU takes antisemitism seriously, along with all forms of racism and prejudice, and provides training and resources to aid understanding and efforts to tackle it.[108]

For the avoidance of doubt, given the sensitivity of the subject, the review does not believe any education union to be inherently antisemitic or racist. All education unions have called out antisemitism as a societal problem that needs addressing. However, stakeholder engagement conducted as part of the review indicated a perception among some Jewish staff involved in education unions that they felt targeted and unwelcome.

Given their historic and current stance on racism and prejudice, it will, of course, be of concern to the education unions that such perceptions from Jewish individuals and organisations have been shared with the review. This provides an opportunity for the unions to consider whether the actions of branches, representatives and members are consistent with the unions' nationally stated commitments to tackling antisemitism and all forms of racism and prejudice. On the back of that, there is clearly an opportunity for them to build on their anti-racism efforts by addressing antisemitism, improving understanding of members and officers, and holding branches and members accountable where allegations are substantiated.

Recommendation 19

Education unions should have robust policies and processes to tackle antisemitism and ensure members are sufficiently trained in understanding, recognising and responding to antisemitism. Any incidents of alleged antisemitism by trade union officials, representatives or members must be consistently addressed in line with union policies to tackle racism or prejudice.

[107] Monaghan Report (2025)

[108] Independent review stakeholder meeting with Sir David Bell (22 April 2026)

External influences on decision making

Parents, campaign groups and community leaders can exert pressure, either directly or indirectly, on schools and colleges to influence decision-making. While some decisions may appropriately be subject to parental engagement and accountability, intimidation, harassment or organised pressure intended to influence professional decision-making can have significant impacts on social cohesion, staff and learner safety, and feelings of inclusion.

Schools and colleges may become risk-averse, making decisions to avoid controversy or align with external pressure, while underestimating the harm caused by prejudice, discrimination or hatred.

The call for evidence found reported examples of settings avoiding addressing incidents because they feared upsetting the wider community. Schools and colleges should make decisions based on safeguarding, professional conduct, employment law and evidence, not on who can generate the strongest public pressure campaign or out of fear of stoking community tensions.

The review has heard of parent groups who have mobilised to exert pressure on schools and colleges in response to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The issue is not whether parents' campaign for Palestine or Israel or anything else. Rather, it is how schools and colleges exercise lawful decision-making when facing organised external pressure from any campaign group.

In a further example, a primary school was accused of being biased because one of their trustees was Jewish – which was cited as the reason for why the school was targeting learners who refused to remove items showing support for Palestine. These accusations suggest parents were relying on a stereotype that Jews have loyalties or control over such decisions.

Another school leader experienced threats for failing to take a political stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict. Although not necessarily antisemitic, this illustrates the extreme pressure schools and colleges have come under in the last few years. In both examples, parents and community members have organised to exert pressure to an unacceptable level.

Finally, through stakeholder engagement and the call for evidence, the review heard examples of schools and colleges facing opposition to visiting speakers or organisations because they were Jewish, had links to Israel, or explored issues relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict. A prominent, recent example of a visiting speaker facing opposition by certain elements of a school or college community was the postponement of Damien Egan MP's visit to a school in his constituency in Bristol. An Ofsted inspection and independent review led by Dame Joan McVittie concluded that the postponement of the visit by the school was not made for reasons

of antisemitism, rather for safeguarding reasons and the prospect of potential protests.[109]

Managing professional conduct

One example identified during the review involved a complaint considered by a multi-academy trust concerning a non-teaching staff member in a primary school.[110] The complaint alleged that the individual had made antisemitic statements on social media and may have had links to a proscribed organisation, among a number of other concerns. Following an investigation, some allegations were not substantiated by the available evidence.

A disciplinary panel subsequently found that the staff member had committed misconduct, but the threshold for gross misconduct had not been met. The outcome was therefore a written warning rather than dismissal.

The review heard concerns that the case attracted interest beyond the disciplinary process, including organised support for the staff member and discussion of potential protests. While there was no evidence that these activities determined the panel's decision, the case illustrates the wider pressures that schools, colleges and trusts can face when managing sensitive allegations that attract community attention. The review noted that, in different circumstances, such pressures could risk exerting undue influence on decision-makers and therefore require careful management.

Schools and colleges avoiding legitimate topics

The review found evidence that even if there is no external pressure, the very fear that such activity could be triggered by discussing controversial issues in the classroom is creating a ‘chilling effect’ where professional judgement is replaced by risk avoidance.

The Independent Advisor for Social Cohesion and Resilience, Dame Sara Khan’s Review (2024) highlighted concerns that some teachers were avoiding controversial topics because they feared campaigns, harassment or intimidation. For example, a teacher may avoid discussing antisemitism, teaching aspects of the Israel-Palestine conflict, discussing extremism, or using materials about religious tolerance, not because the content is inappropriate, but because they fear complaints, online backlash, or protest. (This is discussed further in section 3 of this review)

---

[109] Independent inquiry finds ‘No evidence of antisemitism’ at Bristol school after MP’s visit postpone…

[110] Independent Review stakeholder meeting with Sir David Bell (20 May 2026)

Strengthening support for school and college leaders

Senior leaders and teachers should not be expected to manage the risk of complaints, community pressure, or organised campaigns in isolation. The Khan Review (2024) said that it did *"not believe schools are given adequate support, guidance and training on how to mitigate and manage such incidents".*[111] This was reinforced by the call for evidence which highlighted the need for stronger support from local authorities and community cohesion teams when leaders were faced with protests and threats. There was also a reported lack of awareness of existing resources such as those provided through Educate Against Hate.

These pressures are intensified by the speed at which concerns, allegations or partial accounts can now circulate through social media, messaging groups and wider online networks. In sensitive or contested situations, schools and colleges may find that the public narrative moves faster than their ability to establish the facts, consult appropriately and respond through proper processes. This creates additional pressure for leaders, who need to maintain confidence and respond in a timely way while also protecting learners, respecting due process and avoiding premature conclusions.

At the same time, senior leaders should have access to a clear, external advice route for complex situations involving protest activity, harassment, or potential breaches of political impartiality (relevant to schools). This could include access to expert advice or coordinated support at a local, regional or national level.

Strengthening this support would reduce the likelihood of schools or colleges resorting to reactive measures and instead enable them to respond in a measured, confident and consistent way while maintaining safe and inclusive environments for all.

[111] The Khan Review: Threats to Social Cohesion and Democratic Resilience (2024)

Recommendation 20

The Department for Education should establish a dedicated support service to help schools, colleges and local authorities manage complex incidents related to antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred. To enable this:

a. The Department for Education should establish a well-defined and well publicised ‘front door’ for support.

b. The Department for Education should establish a network of peer-to-peer advisers (at local authority or at school/college leader level, as appropriate) to provide rapid, expert support.

6. Safety and security of Jewish schools[112]

"[Children going through extensive security to get to schools] is, frankly, completely undignified."[113] - Jonny Newton, Community Security Trust

This chapter examines the unique security, safeguarding and workforce pressures faced by Jewish schools, and the impact that antisemitism has on pupils and staff both on and beyond the school site.

Schools, colleges and local authorities have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. These obligations arise principally from safeguarding legislation (s.175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Independent School Standards), associated statutory guidance; *Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)* and those bodies' general duty of care under the law of negligence.

Alongside these safeguarding obligations, education settings and local authorities, in their capacity as employers, also have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to assess and manage risk to the health and safety of staff, children and young people and others. These duties include taking reasonably practical steps to reduce the risk of harm arising from violence, abusive behaviour and other security-related threats.

While these legal duties apply across the education sector, the level and visibility of security at Jewish schools is distinct and significantly more robust than at other schools. This reflects the specific and persistent risk associated with antisemitism.

Jewish schools face a combination of high-impact threats, including reconnaissance activity and threats of violence. For example, a Jewish school in Hertfordshire received a threatening letter warning that staff would have their "throat slit".[114] Alongside these serious threats, schools also experience more frequent forms of hostility, such as vandalism and verbal abuse.

As a result, all children attending Jewish schools need to walk through extensive security to get into school. This typically includes a combination of physical, personnel-based, and community-led measures. These often involve private security guards and protective infrastructure such as perimeter fencing, controlled entry systems, and alarm networks, at a level not seen at any other schools. This visibility

---

[112] This chapter uses the term "Jewish schools" primarily. This reflects the fact that the evidence considered, including in relation to security, relates overwhelmingly to school settings rather than colleges.

[113] Independent review stakeholder meeting with Sir David Bell (25 March 2026)

[114] Antisemitic incidents in UK schools soared in 2023, charity reports | Antisemitism | The Guardian

serves both as a deterrent to potential threats and as reassurance for learners, staff, and families.

This is not a new phenomenon; Jewish schools began increasing security measures in the 1970s and 1980s, often funded by parents and community organisations. In 2010, Jewish voluntary aided schools received funding from government for security guards.

Currently, Jewish schools in England receive security funding primarily through a dedicated central government programme known as the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant. Funded by the Home Office and administered by the Community Security Trust (CST), this scheme provides ongoing financial support for the protection of Jewish schools, as well as synagogues and other community institutions.

The programme receives £18 million of government funding annually, with commitments made over multiple years to ensure continuity. More recently, allocations have risen, with up to £28.4 million made available for 2026-27. The scale of CST's charitable fundraising is significant: in the financial year ending 31 December 2024, CST reported £9.43 million in donations and legacies.

This underlines the extent to which protective security for Jewish schools and communal institutions has depended not only on public funding, but also on sustained charitable support. In addition, CST's Security Enhancement Project distributes some of CST's own fundraised resources to assist Jewish locations – including schools – with physical security upgrades. This is provided as part of a matching fund, where CST will typically fund up to 50% of the costs, up to £40,000.

Educational visits

Despite the availability of funding for security, it does not fully cover the costs. This means schools must draw on their own budgets to make up the shortfall. In addition, the Protective Security Grant cannot be used for school trips or outings. This situation is unique to Jewish schools and as one Headteacher explained to the review - "*we are operating in a constant state of vigilance. Increasingly, my decisions are driven not by what would enrich our pupils' experiences, but by what will keep them safe*."[115]

Qualitative evidence from stakeholders indicates that teachers often feel a heightened sense of responsibility and vulnerability regarding trips and educational

[115] Submission to the independent review (5 June 2026)

visits.[116] Staff report anxiety about managing groups of learners in open or unfamiliar environments, particularly where antisemitic incidents have previously occurred.

This dynamic can lead to reluctance to organise trips, or the introduction of additional precautions that increase complexity and cost. This is reinforced by parental concerns, which can further discourage Jewish schools from proceeding with off-site activities. Leaders are required to dedicate considerable time and effort to manage concerns and provide reassurance.

The implications can be significant. Educational visits and opportunities to participate in wider school life, including activities with other schools, play an important role in children and young people's social development, cultural exposure, and enrichment.

Where security concerns limit these opportunities, there is a risk that children and young people of Jewish schools experience a narrower educational and social experience compared to their peers. At the same time, the burden on teachers increases, as they must balance educational value with safety considerations and the potential consequences of an incident.

Recommendation 21

The Home Office should utilise some of the £250 million recently announced by the Home Secretary for additional security support for Jewish communities to help ensure that Jewish schools and colleges can undertake educational visits safely, alongside meeting wider security needs.

Travel

Antisemitic incidents in schools and colleges have risen sharply in recent years, contributing to an ongoing climate of vulnerability. Importantly, risks extend beyond school premises; children and young people are often exposed to harassment and intimidation while travelling to and from school, particularly when visibly identifiable as Jewish. One respondent to the call for evidence highlighted that whilst Jewish children and young people may be safe within schools, they remain scared and "do not wear their school's uniform in public".[117]

As part of a submission to the review, we heard of someone's 14-year-old granddaughter being called a "Jew bitch" on the bus and physically attacked in a separate incident.[118] This has, understandably, left this girl feeling anxious.

---

[116] Independent review stakeholder meetings with Sir David Bell (4 June 2026, 17 June 2026)

[117] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

[118] Submission to the independent review (29 April 2026)

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident. Indeed, every pupil in one class at a Jewish school the review visited was able to describe a personal experience of antisemitic abuse encountered on their journey to or from school.[119]

In 2024, 23% of Jewish parents reported that their children had experienced antisemitism during their commute or in the vicinity of school,[120] and transport data further confirms the presence of such incidents involving young people.

Indicative data from British Transport Police and the Metropolitan Police shows there were 419 reported incidents of antisemitic hate crimes across all TfL transport over a two-year period,[121] one in five of which were young people aged under 18. Visibility plays a crucial role in shaping risk; children and young people wearing identifiable uniforms or religious dress are more likely to be targeted, leading some schools to advise their learners to conceal indicators of their identity while travelling.

One respondent to the call for evidence said that their school had suggested that pupils did not have to wear their kippahs while travelling to or from school, to avoid potential abuse; this respondent felt that "*this is not effective - it requires a change of behaviour from the victims while doing nothing to stop the antisemitism*."[122] We should not be in a position where Jewish children and young people feel they have to adapt their behaviour to be safe.

Increased police presence on or around public transport during peak travel times, when Jewish children and young people are known to be commuting, would act as a visible deterrent and help reduce the risk of antisemitic abuse. The Home Office's recent £250 million, three-year plan to support increased neighbourhood policing in areas with significant Jewish communities, alongside greater surge capacity around synagogues, schools and key religious festivals and holidays will help.

This should be complemented by a targeted public awareness campaign in these areas, clearly signalling that antisemitic behaviour will not be tolerated.

---

[119] Independent review visit with Sir David Bell to a school (20 April 2026)

[120] JPR (2024) Antisemitism in schools

[121] Hate crime in England and Wales is recorded across multiple strands (e.g. race, religion, sexual orientation, transphobic and disability). Jewish people are not categorised as a separate race/ethnicity within standard policy groupings, meaning antisemitic incidents are more likely to be recorded under the religious hate crime strand. As with all crime flags, the data should be approached with caution and be treated as indicative. Additionally, incidents involving school-age children may be under-reported to police or managed internally by schools or colleges, suggesting the figures may be underestimated.

[122] Call for evidence response (June 2026)

Taken together, this would improve perceptions of safety, build confidence among children, young people and staff, and help ensure they can travel to and from school without fear, thereby supporting attendance, wellbeing, and equal access.

Recommendation 22

The Department for Transport should deliver a joint communications campaign with relevant stakeholders to deter antisemitic behaviour, with campaign activity strategically placed at transport hubs near Jewish schools and colleges and accompanied by an evaluation to assess impact and inform future activity.

Workforce pressures

Recruitment and retention are affected not only by the reality of working in a high-security environment but also by how that environment is perceived.

Visible security measures, alongside media coverage of antisemitic incidents, can deter prospective staff from working in Jewish schools, narrowing the applicant pool and making it more difficult to fill key roles. As one school leader noted, concerns about antisemitism and safety are *"constantly on our minds"*, underlining the persistent pressures and worries associated with leading in this context.[123]

This is accompanied by a tangible expansion in day-to-day responsibilities, including *"heightened vigilance"*, increased security staffing, and enhanced access controls.[124] Leadership accountability extends beyond the school site itself, encompassing the safe journey of children and young people between home and school as well as the management of risks throughout the school day. These pressures are particularly acute for school leaders.

PaJeS (Partnership of Jewish Schools) reported that "*the physical security and safety of children has become an overbearing and all-consuming responsibility for headteachers*".[125] Leaders should be supported in these additional safety responsibilities with capacity, timely information, guidance, and multi-agency coordination needed to translate risk into effective action.

---

[123] Quote from John Dalziel, head teacher of King David High, Manchester https://www.theguardian.com/news/2024/feb/15/antisemitic-incidents-in-uk-schools-soared-in-2023-charity-reports

[124] Quote from Dr Melanie Lee, head teacher of JCoSS, London

https://www.thejc.com/news/jewish-school-leaders-step-up-security-as-jfs-allows-pupils-to-ditch-blazers-ip341inv

[125] Submission to the independent review (12 June 2026)

Leaders should also have access to appropriate pastoral and wellbeing support from peer-to-peer networks that recognises the sustained cognitive and emotional demands associated with managing security and safeguarding risks. This should include structured support mechanisms and access to specialist services where needed, helping leaders to manage the additional workload, maintain resilience, and continue to lead effectively in complex and high-pressured environments.

Recommendation 23

The Department for Education should work in partnership with relevant organisations and community stakeholders to ensure that Jewish school and college leaders have access to comprehensive support, specialist advice on security and safeguarding risks, opportunities to participate in professional networks for sharing good practice, and leadership support and mentoring.

7. Accountability

"Antisemitism has no place in education. Where antisemitism does arise, effective inspection can consider whether leaders have fully recognised the issue, responded robustly to it, and properly supported those affected."[126] - Sir Martyn Oliver, HM Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills.

This chapter examines the accountability arrangements that underpin schools' and colleges' responses to antisemitism, focusing on the roles of inspectorates, local authorities and academy trusts.

Without effective accountability arrangements, the recommendations outlined in this review would have little impact. While responsibility for tackling antisemitism rests primarily with individual institutions and their leaders, oversight is provided through a wider system that includes inspectorates, academy trusts, college groups, local authorities and safeguarding partnerships.

The review found that existing accountability structures are generally in place, but concerns about antisemitism are often considered through broader judgements relating to safeguarding, leadership, behaviour, equality and institutional culture rather than as a distinct area of scrutiny. As a result, incidents and wider patterns of antisemitism may not always be sufficiently visible or consistently reported.

Strengthening accountability within existing frameworks would improve the consistency and effectiveness of responses to antisemitism. This includes examining the roles of key oversight bodies and identifying practical measures to improve visibility, reporting and understanding. Such measures would help ensure that schools and colleges are better supported, and held accountable, for responding effectively to antisemitism and other forms of racial and religious prejudice.

Inspectorates

Inspection is a principal means by which schools and colleges are held accountable for the quality of education, leadership, safeguarding, and the wider experiences of learners. Through inspections conducted by Ofsted and, where relevant, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), concerns about culture, leadership effectiveness, pupil welfare, equality duties and the management of incidents (such as antisemitism) can inform judgements and inspection outcomes.

Within the scope of this review, Ofsted's relevant remit includes maintained schools, academies, FE providers and non-association independent schools. In the

[126] Independent review stakeholder meeting with Sir David Bell (25 March 2026)

independent sector, inspection is delivered through both Ofsted and ISI. Although both inspectorates assess independent schools against the Independent School Standards, they do so through distinct inspection frameworks. As a result, similar issues may be evidenced and reported in different ways in practice.

Inspection frameworks do not treat antisemitism, or other forms of racism or religious prejudice, as standalone categories of scrutiny. Instead, such issues are considered through wider inspection judgements, or in the case of independent schools, through compliance with relevant standards. This reflects the design of inspection and regulation, which is intended to assess institutional effectiveness or compliance with regulatory standards rather than report separately on individual forms of prejudice.

The review's evidence raised concerns about whether efforts to tackle antisemitism were sufficiently and consistently looked at in practice. In the independent sector, differences between inspection frameworks mean that such issues may be evidenced and reported in different ways. Engagement with ISI did not identify any sector-specific issues

The review therefore considers that accountability for how schools and colleges identify and respond to antisemitism can be strengthened within existing inspection arrangements. The most proportionate step is to include clearer examples and prompts to support inspectorates in considering antisemitism and other forms of racial and religious prejudice within existing evaluation areas.

Recommendation 24

Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate should each build on existing training and professional development, to support inspectors' confidence in evaluating and reporting on how effectively leaders identify, manage and prevent incidents of antisemitism and other forms of racial and religious prejudice.

There is merit in strengthening the evidence base through inspectorate-led thematic work, so that there is a clearer national picture of how antisemitism and other forms of racism and prejudice are experienced and addressed across schools and colleges. Such an approach would remain consistent with the design of current inspection systems, while helping to address one of the issues identified by the review: that accountability may be present in principle but may be insufficiently visible or consistent in practice.

Recommendation 25

The Department for Education should commission Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate, separately and within their respective remits, to undertake thematic work on how schools and colleges identify, prevent and respond to antisemitism and other forms of racism and religious prejudice, helping to build a stronger national picture and improve understanding of effective practice.

Local authorities

Although local authorities' responsibilities vary across different types of schools and colleges, they retain an important area-wide role as children's social care authorities, statutory safeguarding partners and public authorities subject to equality duties.

Under *Working together to safeguard children*, local authorities are one of the statutory safeguarding partners, alongside police and health. The 2026 edition of the guidance strengthens expectations across the safeguarding system, including expectations on leaders to create inclusive, anti-discriminatory cultures, practitioners to challenge racism and discrimination, and safeguarding partners to use and analyse information to identify disproportionality, racism and emerging risks.

This suggests local authorities should play a role in identifying patterns of prejudice-related harm. Information about antisemitism and other forms of prejudice may sit in separate places, including safeguarding referrals, complaints, school and college records, community reporting and local intelligence. Without reliable arrangements for bringing this information together, there is a risk that serious, repeated or cumulative incidents are treated as isolated concerns, particularly where no single incident appears to meet a formal threshold for escalation.

Evidence gathered through the review's meetings with several local authorities suggested that their distinctive contribution is often convening, intelligence-sharing and practical support. The review saw examples of local areas using existing safeguarding, education, community safety and faith/community networks to identify emerging tensions, share information and support schools and colleges in responding to prejudice-related concerns. Good practice included multi-agency hate incident and community cohesion forums, strong Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and headteacher networks, engagement with faith and community leaders, and rapid, tiered support for schools and colleges during periods of heightened tension.

However, such practice is variable, and not all local areas have reliable mechanisms for bringing together information from education, safeguarding, community reporting and local intelligence.

Local safeguarding arrangements should build on existing good practice by using information more effectively to identify where antisemitism and other forms of racism or prejudice may be emerging, recurring or going unaddressed. This would strengthen local authorities' safeguarding role without making them the direct accountability body for every school or college. It would help ensure that cumulative prejudice-related harms are not left invisible within individual institutional processes.

Recommendation 26

Local authorities should, through existing responsibilities, partnerships and local intelligence arrangements, work with safeguarding partners and other relevant agencies to help inform local visibility of patterns of antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice affecting children and young people, and to support schools and colleges in responding effectively where concerns arise.

Academy trusts

Academy trusts have direct accountability for the governance and oversight of their academies. Trust boards and executive leaders have a role in assuring themselves that antisemitic and other racist incidents are recognised appropriately, recorded accurately, escalated where necessary and followed by proportionate action.

Trust-level oversight is particularly important where concerns are serious, repeated or contested, or where they raise questions about the consistency of responses across more than one academy. In such cases, trusts can consider whether their wider arrangements provide sufficient challenge, support and organisational learning.

This oversight can help address variations in confidence, recording practices or understanding of contemporary antisemitism by setting common expectations, supporting consistent policies and training, and using trust-wide information to identify repeated concerns, gaps in response or wider patterns across academies.

The review therefore welcomes the statutory basis for academy trust inspections established through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026. These inspections, expected to begin during the 2027/28 academic year, provide an opportunity to consider how trusts assure themselves that effective oversight arrangements are in place across their academies. This includes where trust-level leadership, policies, training and complaints arrangements are relevant to safeguarding, equality and the handling of antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred.

Recommendation 27

Ofsted should consider, as it develops its academy trust inspection framework, how trust-level oversight of responses to antisemitism and other forms of hatred and prejudice can be reflected proportionately, particularly where concerns are serious, repeated, or evident across more than one school.

8. Conclusion

Antisemitism in schools and colleges cannot be addressed through piecemeal action. The evidence gathered throughout this review demonstrates that meaningful and sustained improvement will require a comprehensive and coherent approach across the school and college systems.

The recommendations in this report are designed to be taken together, strengthening policies, processes, leadership, staff capability, curriculum delivery, reporting mechanisms and accountability arrangements. It is the cumulative impact of this package of proposed reforms that provides the greatest opportunity to improve the experiences and outcomes of Jewish learners and staff.

The success of these recommendations will depend not only on whether they are accepted, but on how effectively they are implemented. Implementation should be approached as a long-term programme of change rather than a series of discrete initiatives. This will require clear national leadership, sustained commitment and close collaboration between government, schools, colleges, sector bodies and faith and community organisations.

Consideration should be given to establishing a clear implementation plan, with defined responsibilities, realistic timescales and appropriate support for institutions. Guidance, training and communications will need to be aligned so that expectations are understood and consistently applied across the sector.

Effective implementation will also require appropriate monitoring and evaluation. Progress should be tracked to assess whether the recommendations are being embedded into practice and whether they are delivering the intended outcomes. To support transparency, accountability and continued momentum, the government should publish an update on progress within one year of responding to this review, setting out the progress against the recommendations. Without ongoing oversight and accountability, there is a risk that momentum will be lost, and the full benefits of the recommendations will not be realised.

The next step is for the government to consider and respond to the recommendations set out in this report. The government has an opportunity to strengthen the school and college sector's response to antisemitism and create learning environments in which Jewish children and young people feel safe, included and able to thrive. The recommendations provide a practical foundation for achieving this ambition, and their collective adoption provides the best prospect of delivering meaningful and lasting change.

978-1-5286-6871-2

E03703747